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WAR GAMES

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WAR GAMES

FADE IN:

1 EXT. DESERT LANDSCAPE - DUSK 1

HARD WIND drives dust and tumbleweed over a large expanse of wasteland.

The rhythmic CHOP of an approaching Air Force HELICOPTER can be HEARD. It appears on the horizon, insect-like, against the darkening sky.

2 EXT. HELICOPTER - DUSK 2

Along with the helicopter pilot, ride two Air Force officers, JERRY and STEVE. Jerry, a Captain in his late thirties, speaks into a microphone requesting permission to land. His deputy, Steve, mid-twenties, clean-cut with the look of the new Air Force, sits quietly beside him.

3 INT. HELICOPTER - DUSK 3

The chopper approaches a Minuteman Missile Launch Facility which on the surface appears to be just a few small, non-descript military buildings surrounded by Cyclone fencing.

4 EXT. MINUTEMAN MISSILE LAUNCH FACILITY - DUSK 4

The chopper bucks in the sand-laden wind as it descends onto a small landing pad. Each holding a briefcase, Jerry and Steve walk briskly towards one of the buildings.

5 INT. MINUTEMAN MISSILE LAUNCH FACILITY - DUSK 5

In a small entrance room, the men remove their parkas. Underneath they wear blue fatigues with blue ascots. They cross to a GUARD who sits behind a bullet-proof window. With foregone routine, Jerry slides his ID card through a narrow slot.

JERRY
(indicating Steve)
I'll vouch for Lieutenant Ulmer.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED: 5

With a glance at the deputy, the Guard lifts a phone.

GUARD
(into phone)
The replacement team has arrived, sir.

He pushes a BUZZER admitting the men into a secure area.

6 INT. SECURE AREA - DUSK 6

In the secure area the Guard now turns to Steve.

GUARD
Can I see your ID card, please?

Steve complies. The Guard then gives each man a service pistol with holster. As they begin strapping them on, Jerry eyes a soft drink vending machine.

GUARD
(continuing)
Machine's broken. All you can get is grape soda.

Jerry drops quarters into the machine and Steve does likewise. At another machine, Jerry buys a bag of Fritos and Steve finishes up their provisioning with a package of Hostess Pink Snowballs.

JERRY
(to Guard)
See you tomorrow.

7 INT. HALLWAY 7

Jerry and Steve walk a short distance to an elevator, where a nervous and very YOUNG GUARD with an M-16 snaps to attention.

JERRY
What's happening, Airman?

YOUNG GUARD
Fine, sir.

Jerry and Steve exchange looks and enter the elevator.

8 INT. ELEVATOR 8

The men are silent during a long descent. Jerry rips into his bag of Fritos and offers some to Steve.

STEVE
No thanks.

9 INT. UNDERGROUND LAUNCH LEVEL - ARRIVAL CORRIDOR 9

Massively over-built of steel and concrete, the structure gives the impression it could withstand a direct hit by a five-megaton bomb. Jerry steps out of the elevator ahead of Steve and walks toward a huge blast door. Jerry punches a code into a keyboard and speaks into an intercom.

JERRY
This is Captain Halloran. Ready to authenticate. Lima, Oscar, November, Lima, Whiskey, Golf.

With the WHIR of hidden MOTORS the locking pins withdraw. The men push the door open and enter another corridor.

10 ANGLE - SECOND CORRIDOR 10

Jerry and Steve continue towards a second blast door. Jerry again punches out a combination, then speaks into an intercom.

JERRY
Avon calling...

The door is opened by a MISSILE COMMANDER.

11 INT. MISSILE LAUNCH CAPSULE 11

The ten by twenty foot capsule is crammed with panels of high-frequency transmitters, circuit breakers, air purification and backup systems, a high-speed teleprinter with direct line to SAC headquarters, a refrigerator, a small and unprivate latrine, and two launch consoles twelve feet apart. Each console has a computer terminal and a large annunciator panel that gives the status of each of the ten missiles controlled by this capsule. A bright red strongbox with two locks is mounted on the wall.

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED: 11

Jerry and Steve enter and exchange a casual salute with the Missile Commander, as his Deputy gathers up papers in preparation to leave.

JERRY
How's it going?

MISSILE COMMANDER
Good.
(reacting to Jerry's moustache)
What's that?

JERRY
What?... My moustache...

MISSILE COMMANDER
New image?

JERRY
(shrugs)
Why not?

The Missile Commander surveys the moustache as his Deputy steps to the doorway.

MISSILE COMMANDER
Well, gentlemen, have a good one.

The outgoing team leaves the capsule.

Jerry seems totally familiar with the environment. He unstraps his holster and hangs it near his chair which is mounted on tracks.

Steve settles into the chair in front of his console and starts to run through a checklist of its functions.

Jerry examines his moustache in a mirror.

STEVE
Number three is still off alert, sir. Other than that all nine birds are clean and green with no warnings at this time.

JERRY
(fingering moustache)
I like it.

12 INT. ICBM SILO 12

The CAMERA PANS UP the unblemished surface of polished aluminum TO REVEAL the towering cylindrical form of an ICBM in its silo.

13 INT. MISSILE LAUNCH CAPSULE - LATER 13

Jerry reads a paperback detective novel while Steve munches on a Hostess Pink Snowball as he studies a technical manual. Suddenly, a warble comes over the loudspeaker.

VOICE
(over loudspeaker)
Blue dash alpha...blue dash alpha ...blue dash alpha... Stand by for message.

Both men snap into action. Each grabs a red Format Book from a shelf above their console. They flick through to a blue plastic page marked BLUE DASH ALPHA/ SIOP EXECUTION ORDER.

JERRY
(slightly alarmed)
Stand by to copy message.

STEVE
Standing by.

VOICE
(over loudspeaker)
Blue dash alpha...blue dash alpha ...blue dash alpha... Part one... Romeo, Oscar, November, Charlie, Tango, Tango, Lima.

Each man carefully copies the code into the spaces in his Format Book with a felt marker.

VOICE
(continuing; over loudspeaker)
Part two... Zero, seven, two, zero, three, five. Authentication ... Delta, Lima, Golf, two, two, four, zero, nine, Tango, Victor, Xray.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED: 13

Jerry unstraps his seat belt and moves quickly to the red strongbox. Steve is there to meet him. In tense silence, they each use the keys they wear on neck chains to open the two locks. Once open, they each remove a brass key and a blue credit card-like Authenticator marked "BLUE - A."

At their seats, Jerry and Steve nervously rip the seals off their Authenticators. Jerry's fingers tremble slightly as he compares the letters on his Authenticator with those he has just copied down. They match. Jerry then compares it with the letters appearing on his computer screen. Once again, they match.

STEVE
Holy shit.

Jerry remains staring at the screen.

JERRY
Calm down, Professor. Run a confirmation. Something must be haywire.

Silent, but with sudden, grim determination, each man types into his terminal. Within a few seconds the screens display:

LAUNCH ORDER CONFIRMED

MISSILES ENABLED:
TARGET SELECTION COMPLETE
TIME ON TARGET SEQUENCE COMPLETE
YIELD SELECTION COMPLETE
LAUNCH TIME T MINUS 60 SECONDS
BEGIN COUNTDOWN

An ALARM SOUNDS as both men stare at the screens. Jerry seems lost in thought.

STEVE
Sir?

JERRY
Let's do it.

Each man buckles his seat belt and inserts his key into a slot marked "OFF, SET, LAUNCH."

JERRY
(continuing)
Launch key inserted.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED: (2) 13

STEVE
Roger.

Steve is poised, awaiting an order from his Commander. Jerry just stares at the key.

JERRY
(beginning to falter)
Uh...insert Unlock Codes.

STEVE
Stand by...
(sets codes)
Unlock Codes inserted.

JERRY
All right...with me now... prepare to go to 'Set'...

Both men sit with their hands on the keys.

JERRY
(continuing)
And...'Set.'

They twist their keys simultaneously to "SET."

STEVE
Roger...at 'Set.'

Seconds tick, they sit motionless, hands on the keys. Finally, Steve looks over at Jerry.

STEVE
(continuing)
Ready to launch on your command, sir.

Jerry says nothing. He seems fixated on the key. Then:

JERRY
Wait a minute... I wanna get this straight with somebody on the goddamn phone before I kill twenty million people.

Jerry grabs the phone. A LOUD WAIL BLARES from the earpiece. He slams it down.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED: (3) 13

STEVE
Twenty seconds.

JERRY
Get me wing command post on your direct line.

Steve picks up the phone. Another LOUD WAIL. He turns helplessly to Jerry.

JERRY
(continuing)
SAC. Try SAC Headquarters on the HF.

STEVE
(pleading)
Captain, we only have fifteen seconds to launch...

JERRY
Goddamnit, I want to know what's happening up there. I want a confirmation. Get SAC...

STEVE
There's no time.

Jerry snatches up a headset. He begins turning the channel selector on a military transmitter. Nothing.

STEVE (O.S.)
Sir... They're probably all vaporized.

Jerry looks up.

STEVE
Please, sir, prepare to go to launch.

Jerry hesitates. The monitor reads:

T-3...T-2...T-1...LAUNCH

STEVE
(continuing)
Now... Launch.

Jerry freezes. He can't do it.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED: (4) 13

STEVE
(continuing)
Please sir, together with me...
Turn the key.

Jerry sits inert with his hand on the key.

STEVE
(continuing;
shouts)
Turn the key.

"LAUNCH" continues to flash red on the computer screens. The ALARM continues to BLAST.

14 MAIN TITLE MONTAGE - STOCK 14

The molten half orb of a thermonuclear explosion fills the screen.

Columns of fiery clouds rise above the landscape.

Blast wind disintegrates suburban tract houses.

Five nuclear fireballs erupt in tandem, the last climbing majestically skyward.

Blast wind obliterates a suburban living room where a family of mannequins is sitting.

Details of churning clouds, convulsing with the surface heat of the sun, blend in the final abstraction of a holocaust.

THE MAIN TITLE ENDS: as the clouds of fire dissolve into the ashen white of high altitude cumulus. And, suddenly, emerging from them, the magnificent ice-clad crests of the Rocky Mountains can be seen below.

15 EXT. CHEYENNE MOUNTAIN - DAY 15

Descending towards the bulk of a single massive peak, details of the landscape can be seen. A dark blue Air Force station wagon climbs a winding road and stops at a small parking area where a Cyclone fence and a small security building can be seen. It is the entrance to NORAD (North American Air Defense Command) in Cheyenne Mountain...

16 EXT. NORAD - ARRIVAL AREA - DAY 16

Two men, distinguished by the careful tailoring of top echelon Washington bureaucrats, get out.

ARTHUR CABOT, oldest of the two, is immediately greeted by PATRICIA HEALY, thirtyish, a civilian employee of the Defense Department.

PAT
Mr. Cabot, I'm Pat Healy, Dr. McPhearson's assistant...

LYLE WATSON, Cabot's assistant, introduces himself as the group heads towards a security gate. Pat distributes red ID tags which the men clip to their jackets.

PAT
(continuing; to Cabot)
We set up a briefing pending your arrival. In the meantime, if you have any questions, I'll do my best to fill you in.

The group arrives at the security gate and Healy leads them through.

17 INT. NORAD ENTRANCE TUNNEL - DAY 17

Pat Healy, Cabot, and Watson sit on a small electric tug driven by a shadowy Airman in dark fatigues. They are silent during their descent into the man-made grottos of NORAD.

18 ANGLE 18

The tug passes supply trucks parked at a loading area and heads through two huge blast doors that lead into the Combat Operations Center: a windowless city of fifteen buildings constructed inside a five-acre grid of interconnecting chambers. Each building sits clear of the rock walls on massive hydraulic shock absorbers.

19 INT. NORAD COMPUTER CONTROL ROOM 19

DR. JOHN McPHEARSON, a Senior Advisor with the Department of Defense, leans over a table top of blueprint schmatics. He discusses the fine points of a vast computer system with his Assistant, PAUL REINER, a rumpled and high-strung young man.

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED: 19

Pat Healy enters and McPhearson glances up.

PAT
They're here.

McPhearson removes his jacket from a chair back and starts out of the room.

20 INT. NORAD - HALLWAY 20

McPhearson straightens his tie as he walks beside Pat Healy.

PAT
Cabot and Watson came on their own. No senators and no dome-heads from Rand.

McPHEARSON
Sounds promising.

PAT
We could come through this without a scratch.

They reach the doorway to another building.

McPHEARSON
We might even do better than that.

21 INT. NORAD - BRIEFING ROOM 21

In a SLOW PAN the CAMERA REVEALS a row of silent observers in the dark limbo of the briefing room. Cabot, Watson, and Ms. Healy, sit in the company of GENERAL JACK BERINGER, Commander of NORAD; and Dr. John McPhearson. Jerry's voice can be heard from the TV monitor as he is interviewed by a PSYCHIATRIST.

PSYCHIATRIST (V.O.)
Have you ever knowingly caused the death of a human being?

JERRY (V.O.)
You must know from my records... In Vietnam, I participated in numerous air strikes. As an Air Force officer I'm pledged by oath to accept without question whatever task or assignment I'm given... I've always performed my duties without question.

22 ANGLE 22

A TV monitor shows Jerry sitting at a small table in a bare room. A Psychiatrist is seated opposite him.

PSYCHIATRIST
Then, what do you think happened? ... You had absolutely no idea it was a test?

JERRY
No, sir. I thought it was a real strike. I don't know why, but I just couldn't turn that key.

23 ANGLE 23

While McPhearson watches with cool professional interest, Beringer betrays a certain uneasiness.

PSYCHIATRIST (V.O.)
Maybe this time you considered the moral consequences.

JERRY (V.O.)
Like I say, I just don't know.

24 INT. BRIEFING ROOM - LATER 24

A lunch has been set up following the viewing of the interview. McPhearson, seated beside Healy, eats quietly while Beringer argues with Cabot and Watson.

CABOT
How many were interviewed?

BERINGER
All of them. But, the man you saw was typical.

CABOT
You say they all had good or even excellent service records?

BERINGER
We don't just pull men out of the ranks. Every single one of those men has an excellent record. It's an honor to be a Missile Commander.

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED: 24

CABOT
Well then, the honor has damn little meaning. Eighteen percent of your men failed...or worse yet ...refused to launch.

Beringer nervously lights a cigar.

WATSON
Thank God it was only a test.

BERINGER
I've ordered a complete review of screening procedures. We've called in some top men from the Meninger Clinic and...

CABOT
For Christ sake Jack, I can't tell the President we're trying to solve a disaster in our national defense with a team of headshrinkers.

BERINGER
We have men who are not flawed and who will obey orders without hesitation. It's a matter of finding them...

CABOT
There is no way to guarantee that the new men won't fail just like the other men did.

BERINGER
(getting hot)
Are you saying that in the entire Air Force we don't have men capable of a missile command?

CABOT
I'm not taking shots at the Air Force. The caliber of all men in uniform has seriously deteriorated over the last ten years... I know that and you know that... Now, how the shit do we solve this problem?

McPHEARSON
Why don't we simply take the men out of the loop?

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED: (2) 24

BERINGER
Get rid of the Missile Commanders?

McPHEARSON
Sure.

BERINGER
We can't take those men out of the capsules... They're the final link in our fail-safe system.

McPHEARSON
And the weakest link in our defense.

BERINGER
Well, I'm against altering our system in any way that reduces human control...

McPHEARSON
We'll only reduce human error. You'll still have human control. At the top where it belongs.

CABOT
(after a short beat)
Would the elimination of these men in any way reduce our effectiveness?

McPHEARSON
I think eliminating these men would improve it.

25 INT. NORAD COMPUTER CENTER 25

The group walks between banks of huge computers as the discussion continues.

McPHEARSON
These computers give us instant access to the state of the world. Troop movements...Soviet missile tests...shifting weather patterns ... All information from our worldwide data gathering system flows into this room...

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED: 25

McPhearson walks toward a large gray machine the size of a VW Bug. PAUL REINER, McPhearson's assistant, looks up from his terminal at the machine.

McPHEARSON
(continuing)
...and into this...the SIOP machine.

The men approach and surround the machine.

McPHEARSON
(continuing)
Paul Reiner, our Systems Analyst.

Reiner nods to the VIP's.

REINER
(caught off guard)
Well...the SIOP spends all its time thinking about World War III. Twenty-four hours a day, three hundred and sixty-five days a year it plays an endless series of war games, using all available information on the state of the world.

26 ANGLE 26

The men follow Cabot as he walks around the machine.

REINER
...It projects Soviet responses to our responses...our responses to their responses and so on... uh, it gets kind of confusing.

WATSON
How do you tell who wins?

REINER
Uh, well, it counts the dead... estimates damage. Then, it looks for ways to improve our score in the next war.

McPHEARSON
It has already fought World War III, I don't know how many times. Nobody in our military can match it for nuclear war experience.

(CONTINUED)

26 CONTINUED: 26

BERINGER
I'd like to point out that this machine acts only as an advisor.

McPHEARSON
We all know the time imperative of nuclear war. If we detect the launch of a Soviet land based missile, it will impact in this country in less than twenty-five minutes... A sub-launched would be here in six. Only this machine could give us a planned response, complete with launch timings and target selections within seconds.

Cabot turns to McPhearson, clearly sympathetic.

CABOT
And right now, this trillion dollar system is at the mercy of those men with the little brass keys.

McPHEARSON
(nods)
In a matter of weeks we could replace them with simple electronic relays.

BERINGER
Relays are not trained officers, capable of making judgmental decisions.

CABOT
Jack, we're looking for a solution, it's important that everyone's views be heard on this... I'll brief the President, and I think Dr. McPhearson should come back to Washington with us and elaborate on his suggestion.

McPHEARSON
(swelling)
Certainly. I'd be happy to do that.

(CONTINUED)

26 CONTINUED: (2) 26

Beringer looks on with barely concealed annoyance.

Watson approaches the machine.

WATSON
May I touch it?

McPHEARSON
Certainly.

Cabot watches as Watson runs his hand over the gray surface of the machine. McPhearson obviously pleased with himself, exchanges a quick look with Pat.

WATSON
So this is where Armageddon is played?
(puts his ear to the machine)
I think I hear the bombs bursting.

The men react with a polite chuckle.

27 EXT. SEATTLE STREET - DAY 27

It's a typically overcast day in a crowded shopping area.

28 INT. FUTUREWORLD ARCADE 28

ROCK MUSIC hammers away as kids swarm around the video games: Space Raiders, Star Castle, Asteroids, pinball, etc.

29 CLOSEUP - DAVID LIGHTMAN 29

Seventeen, pale, carelessly dressed in torn T-shirt and jeans that hang loosely on his lanky frame.

A shy ten-year-old looks on as David intensely plays one of the games. WHISTLES and EXPLOSIONS indicate the unseen action on the computer screen.

30 CLOSEUP OF "MISSILE COMMANDER" GAME 30

David targets and fires his missiles to intercept the enemy force -- so successfully that he's already won six free games.

31 ANGLE 31

David fires another missile and glances at his digital watch during the explosion.

DAVID
(to ten-year-old)
Go ahead...finish it.

He hurries out of the arcade, leaving his free games for the ten-year-old.

32 EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY 32

David makes his way across the school yard and into the main entrance.

33 INT. BIOLOGY CLASS 33

David enters the classroom obviously several minutes late and starts toward the back of the room. MR. LIGGET, sweaty and overweight, stands behind his desk.

LIGGET
You're forgetting something, Mr. Lightman.

Ligget points to a blue book on his desk. David picks it up. On the cover, an 'F' in red ink. Ligget smiles slightly. David shrugs and takes his seat in the back row next to JENNIFER MACK, an impishly pretty brunette.

Ligget wanders before the class, waxing lyric. In his hand he holds another test marked with a large 'F'.

LIGGET
(continuing)
Throughout the long and complex history of science, it should be noted that innovative theorems, concepts and hypotheses have occasionally come as the result of sudden left-field inspiration ... Miss Mack, in answering question number twenty-four, 'Why do nitrogen nodules cling to the roots of plants?'

Jennifer listens, her eyes lowered in embarrassment. David glances at her, clearly sympathetic.

(CONTINUED)

33 CONTINUED: 33

LIGGET
(continuing)
You have written the word 'Love.'

The class titters.

LIGGET
(continuing)
Miss Mack, is there perhaps something you know about nitrogen nodules that we don't? ... Some bit of salacious info to which you alone are privy?

JENNIFER
No.

LIGGET
I see. Then it's just the usual. You didn't know the correct answer -- symbiosis -- because, you don't pay attention in class.

Ligget holds up Jennifer's test paper for all to see. It is marked with a large 'F'.

LIGGET
(continuing)
Would you please pass this to Miss Mack.

He hands it to a student in the front row.

LIGGET
(continuing)
Now, on the questions that concerned the definition of cloning, there seems to be some confusion. Can somebody tell me who first suggested the idea of an advanced organism reproducing asexually.

Ligget turns to the blackboard and begins writing: ASEXUAL REPRODUCTION = WITHOUT SEX.

A few titters.

LIGGET
(continuing)
I fail to see the humor in this. Mr. Rudway?

(CONTINUED)

33 CONTINUED: (2) 33

RUDWAY
Mendel?

LIGGET
A bit early...

David whispers something to Jennifer, who cracks up.

LIGGET
(continuing)
Miss Mack, what is so amusing?

Jennifer looks at David, still laughing.

LIGGET
(continuing)
All right, Lightman, maybe you can tell us who first suggested reproduction without sex.

David looks down at his 'F' and glances at Jennifer before he replies.

DAVID
Your wife?

CUT TO:

34 INT. HIGH SCHOOL - ADMINISTRATION OFFICE - DAY 34

David breezes up to the reception desk and hands a pink slip to a YOUNG BLACK WOMAN.

DAVID
(in a monotone)
Mr. Ligget wants me to discuss an attitude problem with Mr. Kessler.

YOUNG BLACK WOMAN
(buzzing him through)
I think Mr. Kessler's gettin' tired of discussing your attitude problem.

She motions him down a short corridor toward the Boys' Vice Principal's office. He sits down on a bench out of her view. At the far end of the corridor, David can see the school's two computer rooms.

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED: 34

In one, a middle-aged woman is busily working at a terminal; the other room is empty, the door open.

David listens for a moment to the stern voice behind the Boys' VP's door, then gets up and quickly walks towards the deserted computer room, keeping an eye on the woman next door.

35 INT. HIGH SCHOOL COMPUTER ROOM - DAY 35

David darts into the room and pulls out a sliding panel from a desk next to the computer terminal. Taped to the panel is a long list of six-letter words, all crossed out except the last:

PENCIL

36 INT. HIGH SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION OFFICE - DAY 36

David slides the panel back. He hurries to a bench just as the door to the Boys' VP's office opens.

BOYS' VICE PRINCIPAL
Lightman...what a surprise.

CUT TO:

37 EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY 37

David walks rather listlessly along the sidewalk on his way home from school. He carries a single book. Jennifer appears on her Moped and rides beside him.

JENNIFER
Hi.

David glances at her with a trace of smile.

DAVID
Oh, hi.

David continues walking as Jennifer stays beside him on the Moped.

JENNIFER
I hope I didn't get you into trouble.

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED: 37

DAVID
(shrugs)
It's okay.

For a beat they are silent. Then:

JENNIFER
Hey, you want a ride home?

DAVID
Sure.

She stops and he climbs on the back of the Moped.

38 EXT. SEATTLE STREET - DAY 38

Jennifer tools along on her Moped with David on the back. As she rounds a corner, his feet drag.

JENNIFER
(shouting over shoulder)
Lift your knees...

David obeys.

JENNIFER
(continuing)
And sit closer.

David obeys, carefully placing his hands below her breasts.

39 ANGLE 39

David reacts as Jennifer maneuvers between cars.

JENNIFER
What a drag...I hate summer school.

DAVID
What?

JENNIFER
Ligget gave me an 'F' on the final...I'll have to make it up in summer school.

40 EXT. LIGHTMAN HOUSE - DAY 40

They round a corner on the Moped and proceed down a residential street, stopping in front of a middle-income, two-story house. David gets off the Moped.

DAVID
Thanks.

JENNIFER
It's okay...anytime.

David nods. He seems reluctant to go in and Jennifer seems reluctant to leave.

JENNIFER
(continuing)
Hey, what did you get on that test?

DAVID
Well, I don't want to make you feel bad.

JENNIFER
I won't feel bad. What did you get?
(sarcastic)
An 'A' plus.

DAVID
I got an 'F'.

JENNIFER
...'F'?

DAVID
Sure, so don't worry. You're in good company.

JENNIFER
Yeah, but, I want to graduate.

DAVID
So do I.

JENNIFER
That means we'll both be stuck in summer school.

DAVID
Not me.

JENNIFER
What does that mean? Don't you want to graduate?

(CONTINUED)

40 CONTINUED: 40

David doesn't answer for a beat. Then:

DAVID
You want to come in?

Jennifer glances at the house.

JENNIFER
Sure.

She puts down her kickstand, swings off the Moped and follows David towards the house.

41 INT. LIGHTMAN HOUSE - DAY 41

Jennifer follows David inside. Glancing around in the hallway, she sees the house is obviously deserted. David pauses near the staircase.

DAVID
Uh, my room's upstairs.

Jennifer hesitates, then follows him up the stairs.

JENNIFER
Your parents aren't home?

DAVID
They both work.

42 INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAY 42

They approach David's room. He removes a key, unlocks the door and they enter.

43 INT. DAVID'S BEDROOM - DAY 43

It is dark. David flips a switch. The silence is broken by the HUM of ELECTRONIC CIRCUITRY as panels and pools of light appear around the room. Noting that his bed is a mess and a pair of dirty socks are on the floor, David makes a quick, embarrassed attempt at straightening up. Jennifer quickly scans his computer system.

A couple of old Sylvania TV's serve as monitors for an electronic keyboard from an outmoded Altair terminal, a printer rigged from an electric typewriter, wires running to a variety of other makeshift hardware,

(CONTINUED)

43 CONTINUED: 43

...including a modem (telephone coupler), memory storage units and several floppy disk drives.

Jennifer finally settles on an old Sanyo cassette player as a comforting familiar object. She starts to turn it on.

JENNIFER
Is this your sound system?

Jennifer clicks it on and off.

DAVID
It doesn't work.

Jennifer nods. She quickly scans the walls, covered with star maps, satellite reconnaissance photos, and a long cork bulletin board crowded with newspaper clippings. Old exposed radios, a stereo, books and journals clutters the rest of the room.

David sits down at the main terminal and hits the enter key. He takes one of the telephone receivers, places it in the modem, and punches out a phone number.

JENNIFER
What is all this?

Jennifer sits slowly on the bed, taking it all in.

DAVID
This is my computer.
(pointing to screen)
I've dialed into the central school district's system.

MONITOR: THIS IS THE GREATER SEATTLE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT DATANET.

PLEASE LOG IN WITH USER PASSWORD AND ACCOUNT NUMBER.

DAVID
(continuing)
They change the password every couple weeks, but I know where they write it down.

DAVID: PENCIL

(CONTINUED)

43 CONTINUED: (2) 43

The terminal displays a list of subsystems to choose from. David requests "STUDENT TRANSCRIPTS".

A complete record of David's dismal high school career is displayed. David moves the small correction square over to his biology grade...'F'.

JENNIFER
What are you doing?

DAVID
Changing my grade. I didn't really deserve an 'F'...my class work was okay, I just blew it on the finals.

The 'F' becomes a 'C'.

JENNIFER
You can't do that.

DAVID
Done...Oh, you got a 'D' in math.

Jennifer moves from the bed and peers at the monitor, now displaying her own mediocre grades.

JENNIFER
That's none of your business -- what are you doing?

DAVID
I'm changing your biology grade.

JENNIFER
(alarmed)
No. You're going to get me in trouble.

DAVID
Relax. No one will find out. Watch.

David moves the small correction square over the "F" and presses the "A" key.

DAVID
(continuing)
You just got an 'A'. Now you don't have to go to summer school.

JENNIFER
Change it back.

(CONTINUED)

43 CONTINUED: (3) 43

DAVID
Why? They can't possibly trace --

JENNIFER
(upset)
I said change it back.

DAVID
Okay, okay.

The 'A' goes back to an 'F'.

JENNIFER
(cool)
Listen, I guess I better get going.

DAVID
Sure -- thanks again for the ride.

JENNIFER
Yeah. Okay, 'bye.

She doesn't wait for him to show her out of the house. David sits back, looking out the window.

44 DAVID'S POV 44

He watches Jennifer drive away down the street.

45 BACK TO SCENE 45

David turns back to his terminal and changes her biology grade to an 'A'.

CUT TO:

46 INT. LIGHTMAN DINING ROOM - NIGHT 46

Dinnertime at the Lightman house. A TELEVISED GAME DRONES from the den. David picks listlessly at his dinner.

David's father, MR. LIGHTMAN, a thin balding man, meticulously butters a piece of Wonder Bread and then proceeds to wrap it around an ear of corn, slowly rotating it to grease the cob evenly.

(CONTINUED)

46 CONTINUED: 46

David eats impassively.

At the other end of the table, a plate of food sits untouched. From behind the closed kitchen door, MRS. LIGHTMAN's loud telephone chatter can be heard.

MR. LIGHTMAN
You put out the trash?

DAVID
Yeah.

MR. LIGHTMAN
Put the lid on real tight so the dogs can't get it open again?

DAVID
Uh huh.

MRS. LIGHTMAN (O.S.)
But, you've got to see the place...It's my pride and joy of all my listings. Yes, two bedrooms, a bath-and-a-half and a huge bonus room... If you need extra space for the twins, there's a garage that is just begging to be converted... They are willing to carry back on a second... I think we can work something with creative financing.

Mr. Lightman nods approval. David, having finished, rises from the table and puts the dishes in the sink.

47 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT 47

As David crosses the hallway to the vestibule, his mother can be seen on the phone. She gives him a little wave. She is wearing the mustard-colored blazer of a "Century 21 Professional".

MRS. LIGHTMAN
I can show it anytime during working hours...Yes, they're a wonderful old couple. He's an embalmer, works for the county coroner's office...

48 ANGLE 48

Unnoticed, David slips out the door into the night.

49 INT. COMPUTER RETAIL STORE - NIGHT 49

The shopping center store reflects the current craze for computer hardware and software. David ignores most of the displays and machinery that is eagerly admired by other boys his age and younger.

(CONTINUED)

49 CONTINUED: 49

Suddenly, his eye is caught by a monitor with a rather startling video display. A computer animated boxer punches a series of blows that ignite different color patterns.

A logo reads: QUANTUM LEAP IN COMPUTER GAMES -- FROM ATARI COMING THIS SUMMER.

David reacts with obvious interest.

50 INT. DAVID'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 50

David dials long distance information on his phone.

DAVID
Yeah, for Sunnyvale, California please...the number for Atari Incorporated... Thanks. Oh, and could you tell me what other prefixes cover that area? Six-seven-eight and six-seven-nine. Thank you.

David opens a file box and rifles through a collection of thin plastic discs the size of forty-five's -- floppy discs, program storage units for home computers. He inserts one into a disc reader. The MACHINE begins to WHIR and sends a display to the monitor.

MODEM TONE SCAN
COPYRIGHT BY DAVID LIGHTMAN
UNAUTHORIZED USE OR DUPLICATION
OF THIS PROGRAM IS STRICTLY
PROHIBITED.

David places the telephone receiver in the modem and hits the "return" key on the terminal.

MONITOR: TO SCAN FOR MODEM TONES, PLEASE LIST DESIRED AREA CODE AND PREFIX.

DAVID: 408-643, 408-678, 408-679.

He hits the "return" key again and the program starts to run. He turns up the monitor knob on the modem and listens as the computer automatically dials the first number: 408-643-0000. After one RING an irate VOICE answers "Hello". The computer disconnects and RINGS the next number: 408-643-0001.

David turns off the monitor speaker, crawls into bed with his copy of Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, and begins to read as the computer screen fills up with phone numbers.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

51 INT. SNACK BAR - DAY 51

School's out. Kids play electronic games as David sits at the counter of a small snack bar among other students. He is bending a straw into various geometric shapes as Jennifer approaches him from behind.

JENNIFER
(brightly)
Hi David.

DAVID
Oh, hi.

Jennifer sits confidently on the stool beside him. As she settles, the COOK places three cheeseburgers in front of David.

COOK
Three cheeseburgers and a large coke...
(turning to Jennifer)
What about you, honey?

JENNIFER
Just a coke.

The man turns away as David prepares to eat the first burger, larding it liberally with mustard and catsup.

JENNIFER
(continuing)
You're gonna spoil your dinner.

DAVID
This is my dinner.

He finishes and takes a careful bite.

JENNIFER
Listen, I thought it over last night.

David laboriously swallows.

DAVID
What?

Jennifer glances around to see that they are not being spied on.

(CONTINUED)

51 CONTINUED: 51

JENNIFER
That thing with my grade.

David takes another rather too large bite. He chews as she leans close to him and speaks.

JENNIFER
(continuing)
Can you still change it?

David continues chewing.

JENNIFER
(continuing)
I really don't want to go to summer school. I can't believe I was so stupid. I should have let you do it.

DAVID
Well, I don't know... You shouldn't have waited. It might be rough.

JENNIFER
My father just rented this great place at the beach and if I have to go to summer school, it's gonna ruin everything. Can't we at least try? If it doesn't work, it won't be your fault. But can't we just try?

David studies the remainder of his hamburger.

DAVID
Maybe we can give it a try.

52 INT. DAVID'S ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON 52

The monitor is a single square against black limbo, methodically printing out phone numbers as it continues to dial them. The lights are turned on as David enters with Jennifer.

She crosses to the terminal and stares at it curiously.

JENNIFER
What's it doing?

(CONTINUED)

52 CONTINUED: 52

DAVID
Don't touch the keys.

JENNIFER
I won't, but, what's it doing?

DAVID
Dialing numbers. Atari is coming out with these amazing games in a couple of months. I figure the programs for them are probably still in their computer, so I told my system to search for computers in that area.

David takes the phone off the modem, hands it to Jennifer and dials a number.

DAVID
(continuing)
They answer with a tone that other computers can recognize.

As Jennifer hears the high-frequency tone over the phone, she watches the growing list of phone numbers on the monitor.

JENNIFER
You're calling all these numbers?

David nods, grinning.

JENNIFER
(continuing)
Isn't that expensive?

DAVID
There's ways around that.

Jennifer studies him closely, not sure what to make of him.

JENNIFER
Huh... Well, what about my grade?

David shuffles a little and sits at the terminal.

(CONTINUED)

52 CONTINUED: (2) 52

DAVID
The thing is...I really shouldn't disturb the system when it's in this mode.

JENNIFER
But, you said we could try and change it.

David stares at the monitor.

DAVID
Yeah... Well, the thing is... Actually, I already changed it.

JENNIFER
(surprised)
What?... I told you not to do that.

DAVID
I was sure you'd change your mind.

Jennifer pouts for a beat.

DAVID
(continuing)
Besides, I didn't want you to flunk.

JENNIFER
Well, what did I get?

DAVID
An A...

JENNIFER
(after a beat)
Okay, thanks.

David is suddenly slightly embarrassed as Jennifer pulls her chair in closer to his.

DAVID
Let's see what we've got.

He hits the enter key.

(CONTINUED)

52 CONTINUED: 52

MONITOR: BANK OF AMERICA, SOUTHWEST BRANCH HDQTS.
LOG IN PLEASE.

DAVID
Got to make a note of that one,
it might come in handy some day.

Jennifer smiles. David types another number and reaches the Department of Motor Vehicles.

DAVID
(continuing)
Got any tickets?

JENNIFER
You mean if I had a speeding
ticket you could fix it?

DAVID
(shrugs)
Probably. But, it might be
more trouble than it's worth.

David reaches another system; unlike the others, there is no indication of what he has reached, only the conventional request:

MONITOR: LOG ON

DAVID
(continuing)
It doesn't identify itself.
Let's try anything.

DAVID: 000001
OPERATOR

MONITOR: IDENTIFICATION NOT RECOGNIZED BY SYSTEM.
YOU HAVE BEEN DISCONNECTED.

The computer screen goes blank.

JENNIFER
How rude.

DAVID
(redialing)
I'll ask it for help.

JENNIFER
Can you do that?

(CONTINUED)

52 CONTINUED: (4) 52

DAVID
(redialing)
Yeah, on some systems. The more complicated they are, the more they have to help you out.

MONITOR: LOG ON

DAVID: HELP LOG ON

MONITOR: HELP NOT AVAILABLE. LOG ON

JENNIFER
Now what?

DAVID: HELP GAMES

MONITOR: GAMES REFERS TO MODELS, SIMULATIONS AND GAMES WHICH HAVE TACTICAL AND STRATEGIC APPLICATIONS.

DAVID
(excited)
This must be Atari! Turn that on, would you? Let's get a print-out of this.

David motions Jennifer to the printer next to the terminal.

DAVID: LIST GAMES

The monitor is blank for a moment as they both watch it. Then:

MONITOR: GAMES:

FALKEN'S MAZE
BLACK JACK
GIN RUMMY
HEARTS
BRIDGE
CHECKERS
CHESS
POKER
FIGHTER COMBAT
GUERRILLA ENGAGEMENT
DESERT WARFARE
AIR-TO-GROUND ACTIONS
THEATERWIDE TACTICAL WARFARE
THEATERWIDE BIOTOXIC AND CHEMICAL WARFARE

(CONTINUED)

52 CONTINUED: (5) 52

The CAMERA PANS slowly down the list and HOLDS on the last line:

GLOBAL THERMONUCLEAR WAR

DAVID
(continuing; almost a whisper)
Holy shit.

53 EXT. UNIVERSITY AREA - NORTH SEATTLE - DAY 53

David gets off a bus near the University. Cutting across an expanse of lawn, he heads for the computer facility.

54 INT. UNIVERSITY COMPUTER CENTER - DAY 54

David enters, passing through a terminal room where undergraduates peer into their computer terminals. Pausing, David watches for a beat as two bearded students intently play a computer game.

55 INT. UNIVERSITY TAPE STORAGE ROOM - DAY 55

Entering the tape storage room, David spies a lone figure reading a book while he eats a junk food lunch. David ducks behind a storage rack and approaches JIM STING, a fat Rasputin with beard and long, stringy hair, from his blind side.

Engrossed in his reading, Jim fails to notice as David removes an open can of Coke from the table. He waits as Jim reaches for it without looking up from his book. His fingers feel around for the can, then he looks up and sees David. Without a word, Jim lifts the receiver on a telephone.

JIM
Security, please... It's an emergency...

David hangs it up and hands him back his Coke.

DAVID
What's new?

Jim displays his technical manual.

(CONTINUED)

55 CONTINUED: 55

JIM
What's new, is some brain donor has usurped my doctoral thesis and beaten me to print.

DAVID
Is it any good?

JIM
Hard to say. It's written in a kind of binary Haiku.

David glances at the book then puts it down. He removes the printout from a notebook.

DAVID
Here, this is better.

Jim takes the printout and glances at it. David watches him expectantly.

JIM
(glances at it)
Where did you get this?

DAVID
From Atari... I think.

JIM
This doesn't look like it came from Atari... Not unless the elves of that magic kingdom are working on defense contracts. These look like real war games, for big boys.

DAVID
I think this is pretty amazing stuff.

JIM
You better steal some quarters from your mother's purse and head back to the arcade. This has the look of a major military system...

DAVID
But, why would a military system have games like blackjack and poker?

JIM
Probably because they're games that teach basic strategy.

(CONTINUED)

55 CONTINUED: (2) 55

DAVID
These games sound great, man. Like what the hell is...this?

He pushes the list back at Jim.

JIM
(reads)
'Theaterwide biotoxic and chemical warfare'... I hate to think.

Jim mulls over the list.

DAVID
I'm gonna try and get in and play some of them.

JIM
If this is a military system, it'll have so many levels of passwords you couldn't get in with the head of the CIA as your accomplice...

DAVID
You've always said no system is totally secure.

JIM
That doesn't mean anything...I'm a braggard and a liar.

DAVID
So you're telling me this system is so good that even you couldn't get in?

JIM
(after a beat)
Your only shot might be through a back door.

DAVID
What do you mean?

JIM
Well, when I design a system I always put in a password that only I know about... That way, later if I ever want access, I can bypass whatever security they've added on. If you really want inside, find out everything you can about the guy who designed the program...

(CONTINUED)

55 CONTINUED: (3) 55

DAVID
Come on. How do I even find out who the guy is?

JIM
I always forget you're still in high school. I'll give you a clue. You might get in through Falken's Maze.

56 INT. UNIVERSITY LIBRARY - DAY 56

David moves along the huge card catalogue of the Science Library. He removes the first "F" drawer.

57 ANGLE - DAVID 57

His fingers flip through the cards coming finally to:

FALKEN, Stephen W.

"Computers and Theorem Proofs: Towards and Artificial Intelligence." 1960. 329 pp. Doctoral Thesis, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

58 INT. LIBRARY STACKS 58

David winds his way through the narrow stacks. He finds the bound volumes of Scientific American, and opens one. The cover shows a top view of two mazes. In one a live rat scurries towards a food pellet, in the other, a mechanical rat, is slightly farther along.

FALKEN'S MAZE: Teaching a Machine to Think

59 INT. DAVID'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 59

David sits at his computer, the light shining in his face.

MONITOR: IDENTIFICATION NOT RECOGNIZED BY SYSTEM.
YOU HAVE BEEN DISCONNECTED.

60 EXT. AUDIO VISUAL DEPARTMENT - DAY 60

David climbs the steps to the audio visual section of the University campus.

61 INT. VIEWING ROOM 61

The Girl threads a library projector.

GIRL
If you have any trouble, push that button.

The Girl switches on the machine and, as a scratchy leader passes through the projector, she leaves.

DOCUMENTARY FILM:

	VISUAL	NARRATION	
62	ESTABLISHING SHOT: the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.	The Massachusetts Institute of Technology hardly seems the place to find a habitual gambler.	62
63	A scientist sits at the console of an older model computer holding a hand of playing cards.	Especially in the form of a machine.	63
	The machine displays a card and the scientist picks it...the machine displays a flashing "21". The scientist enacts a gesture of loss and throws down his cards.	For obvious reasons, scientists here at M.I.T. call this machine "Card Shark". By learning from its mistakes and applying what it learns to the next game, "Card Shark" has become a seasoned, all-around gambler.	
64	A monitor displays a chess board, backgammon, checkers, tumbling dice, a gin rummy hand.	And it can play a lot more than just cards.	64
65	A monitor generates the image of a poker hand. Then it generates a chess board. The knight makes a sudden move.	Soon, it is hoped that "Card Shark" will be able to take what it has learned at one kind of game and apply it to another. Strategy learned at playing poker could later be effective during the game of chess.	65

	VISUAL	NARRATION	
66	A team of three scientists work on programming an elaborate computer (McPhearson, almost twenty years younger, can be briefly glimpsed in the b.g.)	But "Card Shark" is just a beginning. Future machines might be able to play games like these all by themselves. These scientists believe that eventually their machines might actually be able to teach themselves and not even require the coaching of a human being. Sound a little frightening...?	66
67	JOSHUA, a three-year-old sits at a terminal and pushes a button. The diagram of a tic-tac-toe game appears.	This little guy doesn't seem to think so.	67
	Joshua, places a zero in opposite corners. He catches the chance at a center zero and wins the game.	Just like he learns by his mistakes, so does the machine.	
	The figure of a man. (FALKEN) appears and lifts Joshua, so that he faces us over his father's shoulder. The boy smiles and waves directly at the lens.	And he's won the game and a big hug from his father, British born Professor Stephen Falken, who heads research on M.I.T.'s game playing machines.	
68	ANGLE		68
	David reacts to the film. He pushes the stop button, then reverses the film. As it replays Joshua playing tic-tac-toe, David studies it closely for an elusive glimpse of Falken.		
69	INT. LIBRARY - READING ROOM - DAY		69
	David is slumped in a leather chair, reading <u>Foreign Affairs</u>.		

(CONTINUED)

69 CONTINUED: 69

'Poker and Armageddon: The Role of Bluffing in the Nuclear Standoff.' by Stephen Falken, with John McPhearson.

70 INT. DAVID'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 70

David sits at his monitor, he types: CARD SHARK

MONITOR: IDENTIFICATION NOT RECOGNIZED BY SYSTEM. YOU HAVE BEEN DISCONNECTED.

David heaves a weary sigh of defeat.

71 INT. LIBRARY - SEARCH DESK - DAY 71

The LIBRARIAN hands David a computer print-out:

FALKEN, STEPHEN W.

PUBLICATIONS

1965 - DEPT. OF DEFENSE R-1701-AF - CLASSIFIED
1965 - DEPT. OF DEFENSE P-122-PR - CLASSIFIED
1966 - DEPT. OF DEFENSE R-1800-AF - CLASSIFIED
1968 - DEPT. OF DEFENSE R-1801-AF - CLASSIFIED
1970 - DEPT. OF DEFENSE M-3366-B - CLASSIFIED
1971 - DEPT. OF DEFENSE M-1403-AF - CLASSIFIED

1973 - DECEASED

72 EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF LIGHTMAN HOUSE - DAY 72

Jennifer, wearing skimpy jogging shorts and a tank top, trots along the sidewalk past David's house. After going a short distance she makes a jogger's turn and trots across the lawn to his front door.

73 ANGLE 73

At the door, Jennifer continues trotting in place and breathing deeply as she waits. It opens and Mr. Lightman faces her with a glazed expression.

JENNIFER
(bright)
Hi, is David here?

(CONTINUED)

73 CONTINUED: 73

Lightman stares at her for a beat before answering.

JENNIFER
(continuing)
I've been jogging.

MR. LIGHTMAN
He's up in his room.

He steps aside, letting her enter.

74 INT. STAIRWAY - DAY 74

Mr. Lightman speaks as Jennifer bounces up the stairs.

MR. LIGHTMAN
You ought to take him out running.
He never gets any exercise.

75 INT. OUTSIDE DAVID'S BEDROOM 75

Jennifer knocks. No answer. She opens the door.

76 INT. DAVID'S BEDROOM 76

The room, normally cluttered is now a total mess. Papers, magazines and reams of print-outs are everywhere.

David looks around from where he sits at the monitor. The list of games is up.

JENNIFER
Where have you been?

DAVID
What?

JENNIFER
I haven't seen you around.

DAVID
Oh, yeah...I've been doing some research.

David nods.

David gets up and moves away stacks of print-outs, Xeroxed articles and books from the bed to make a place for Jennifer to sit.

76 CONTINUED: 76

DAVID
Here, you want to sit down?

JENNIFER
What is all this stuff? What is it you're actually trying to do?

DAVID
I'm learning everything I can about the guy who made up that game program, so I can figure out his private password.

77 ANGLE 77

Jennifer lifts an article on Falken. David indicates a photo.

DAVID
That's him.

JENNIFER
Huh, he isn't bad looking... Why don't you just call him? Maybe he'll tell you. Say you're hopelessly hung up on those games.

Jennifer examines a Xeroxed article on Falken.

DAVID
He's dead... That's his obituary.

JENNIFER
(looks at photo)
He wasn't very old...

DAVID
Thirty-seven when he died. I've gone through all the work he did... I've been trying everything.

JENNIFER
For his own private password, I'll bet he'd pick something from his personal life. Something he really liked... Was he into sports?

DAVID
No.

(CONTINUED)

77 CONTINUED: 77

JENNIFER
Do you know that, or are you just saying it because you don't like sports?

DAVID
I'm sure he wasn't into sports. But, maybe his family...

78 ANGLE 78

Jennifer's face suddenly reacts to the obituary that she is reading.

JENNIFER
This is really sad. His wife and little boy were killed in a car crash... It says 'after the tragic loss his health deteriorated'... Oh, and I was right. He was into sports. 'Doctor Falken enjoyed both squash and badminton.'

David suddenly takes the obituary from her.

DAVID
Let me see it.

David begins reading it over, ignoring Jennifer who continues to talk.

JENNIFER
You never run or anything?

David is reading through the obituary.

DAVID
(mutters)
Uh no...

79 ANGLE 79

Falken's eyes seem to stare back from his photo at David. The bottom of the picture is folded over. David's eyes scan down as Jennifer continues talking.

JENNIFER (O.S.)
You really should... It's great.

(CONTINUED)

79 CONTINUED: 79

Jennifer is bored. She ambles around the room.

JENNIFER
(continuing)
You ever get stoned?

DAVID
No...

80 ANGLE 80

David sees a small arm emerging from the bottom of the photo. He begins unfolding it.

JENNIFER
Sometimes when I'm jogging, I feel just like I'm stoned...time passes very slowly and I count endlessly over and over and over...

In the lower part of the frame, Falken's son sits on the floor at his father's feet, looking off somewhere out of frame.

81 CLOSE ON CAPTION 81

"...his wife Margaret and his son Joshua, 3."

JENNIFER (O.S.)
Time just crawls...

82 ANGLE 82

David's eyes lock on the photo. Then, he types in "Joshua". The monitor doesn't disconnect. Then suddenly, for a few seconds, it comes alive with a barrage of incomprehensible data.

DAVID
(cutting her off)
Wow.

JENNIFER
What?

DAVID
We've got something.

(CONTINUED)

82 CONTINUED: 82

The monitor suddenly goes dark and they wait in tense silence until:

MONITOR: GREETINGS PROFESSOR FALKEN

DAVID
We're in. It thinks I'm Falken.

DAVID: HELLO

MONITOR: HOW ARE YOU FEELING TODAY?

JENNIFER
How can it ask you that?

DAVID
It'll ask you whatever it's programmed to ask you.

DAVID: FINE. AND YOU?

MONITOR: EXCELLENT. IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME. CAN YOU EXPLAIN THE REMOVAL OF YOUR USER ACCOUNT NUMBER ON 6/23/73?

DAVID: PEOPLE SOMETIMES MAKE MISTAKES.

MONITOR: YES THEY DO.
SHALL WE PLAY A GAME?

JENNIFER
I think it missed him.

DAVID
Yeah, weird isn't it...

DAVID: LOVE TO.
HOW ABOUT GLOBAL THERMONUCLEAR WAR?

MONITOR: WOULDN'T YOU PREFER A GOOD GAME OF CHESS?

(CONTINUED)

82 CONTINUED: (2) 82

DAVID: LATER.
LET'S PLAY GLOBAL THERMONUCLEAR WAR.

MONITOR: FINE.
WHAT SIDE DO YOU WANT?

DAVID
(continuing)
All right!

DAVID: I'LL BE THE RUSSIANS.

MONITOR: LIST PRIMARY TARGETS.

DAVID
(continuing)
What should we nuke first?

JENNIFER
(thinking)
How about Las Vegas?

DAVID
Las Vegas, great. What else?...
Seattle.

CUT TO:

83 INT. NORAD - CHEYENNE MOUNTAIN, COLORADO - DAY 83

It's business as usual in the Crystal Palace, the cavernous nerve center of Norad.

Seventy or so military personnel sit at various tracking and communication consoles on the floor of the war room. Huge screens display the current position of the world's armed forces. Above them, the scoreboard indicates the current DEFCON (Defense Condition) ranging from 5 -- peacetime -- to 1 -- state of war. We're at DEFCON 5.

84 ANGLE - COMMAND BALCONY 84

Opposite the screens is the Command Balcony, where General Beringer, COLONEL CUOMO, his Chief Communications Officer; and the battlestaff sit behind a row of consoles, with a view of the entire room. To the left, the balcony extends to contain a large-screen computer console, the main SIOP terminal, manned by MAJOR LEM.

85 CLOSE ON NORTH AMERICA - RADAR SCOPE ON FLOOR 85

An electronic blip appears over the horizon, then two more, then a whole flock of blips heading in a trajectory towards the Western U.S.

The RADAR ANALYST looks up for a routine check of his scope and suddenly notices the blips. He grabs the phone.

RADAR ANALYST
(into phone)
I have fourteen, make that fifteen Red Birds at two degrees past apogee, projected target areas... Air Defense Zones two-six, and two-seven.

A WAILING SIGNAL goes off.

86 ANGLE 86

An OFFICER listens to the analyst, adjusts his own monitor, and speaks into his mouthpiece.

OFFICER
We have a missile warning from DEW LINE, check for malfunction and report confidence....

An AIRMAN rushes along the line of monitors and dives into a chair in front of his terminal. He scrambles to put on his headset.

AIRMAN
Communications, clear all lines to SAC Command... Looking Glass... Situation room White House... Situation room Pentagon...

Another MAN rushes quickly to the chair beside him and quickly puts his headset on.

87 ANGLE 87

Radar analyst speaks into his headset.

ANALYST
...nineteen degrees past apogee with thirty-two possible targets in track. Estimate re-entry at zero minus eleven...

88 CRYSTAL PALACE - COMMAND BALCONY 88

Colonel Cuomo sits at a monitor between two other officers. Beringer quickly approaches from behind. His jacket is open and he holds a cup of coffee.

(CONTINUED)

88 CONTINUED: 88

CUOMO
(to Beringer)
Sir, we have a radar tracking of fifteen inbound Soviet ICBM's already over the pole. Estimated impact... twelve minutes. Confirmed target areas, Zones two-six and two-seven.

A map suddenly fills the central screen of the board, showing fifteen blips headed for North America.

BERINGER
Why didn't we get a launch detection?

CUOMO
I'm not sure, Sir. We're checking for DSP malfunction.

89 ANGLE - FLOOR 89

An ANALYST stares at the graphics on the screen in front of him. He speaks into his mouthpiece.

ANALYST
BMEWS has continuous radar tracking on inbounds... confidence is high... I repeat, confidence is high.

90 INT. DAVID'S ROOM 90

David's face registers both the thrill of the game and concern at trying to understand the fleeting jumble of print-outs that fill the monitor. Jennifer looks over his shoulder as David types away on his terminal.

JENNIFER
What does all that mean?

DAVID
I don't know, but it's great.

91 INT. CRYSTAL PALACE - COMMAND BALCONY 91

A COMMUNICATIONS AIDE speaks with Beringer.

COMM. OFFICER
(going over a print out)
...the President is in his limousine, they are diverting to Andrews... the Vice President is out of position... the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs is...

(CONTINUED)

91 CONTINUED: 91

CUOMO
(cutting in)
Missile warning reports no malfunction... confidence is high.

92 ANGLE - COMMAND BALCONY 92

BERINGER
Take us to DEFCON 3. Get on to SAC Command, have them flush the bombers.

The big electric sign flashes from DEFCON FIVE to DEFCON THREE above the tense activity on the floor below.

93 INT. CRYSTAL PALACE - FLOOR 93

An ANALYST reacts first to his own scope. In the b.g. other Analysts can be seen speaking into their headsets and adjusting their screens.

ANALYST
Forty-one targets in track... anticipate impact at zero minus ten plus fourteen...

94 INT. CRYSTAL PALACE - COMMAND BALCONY 94

A COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER speaks into a headset. Beringer can be seen in the b.g.

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER
Bluefly, this is Crystal Palace... zero four seven... SCRAMBLE SCRAMBLE SCRAMBLE... Repeat, scramble all crews.

95 ANGLE - COMMAND BALCONY 95

Colonel Cuomo turns to General Beringer holding out a phone.

CUOMO
SAC Command is launching the bombers... General Powers on the line.

BERINGER
(takes the phone)
Beringer.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

95 CONTINUED: 95

BERINGER (CONT'D)
(defensively)
We never got a launch detection from the satellites. Radar picked 'em up already out of the atmosphere and that's the first thing we heard.

Beringer listens for a few moments and then hangs up. He glances briefly at the board.

BERINGER
(continuing; to Cuomo)
Monitor immediate launch effectiveness of ICBM's...

Beringer's face reflects a certain pain at the sight of the approaching blips on the big board. He takes the yellow phone held by an aide.

96 ANGLE 96

It is evident from the faces of the other men that the most dread of all decisions is about to be made.

97 INT. DAVID'S ROOM - DUSK 97

David types in at the monitor. A little slower now as he thinks over the game.

DAVID
I wonder if I should use my subs...

JENNIFER
Sure, give 'em the works.

There is a LOUD CRASH as a garbage can is knocked over, followed by DOGS BARKING.

MR. LIGHTMAN
David... David...

David moans, then goes to the window. He leaves the machine on.

98 ANGLE 98

From outside the window, David's father calls up to him. He stands near a knocked over garbage can and litter spread in several directions.

(CONTINUED)

98 CONTINUED: 98

MR. LIGHTMAN
I've told you you've got to fasten down the lids... They've knocked the cans over... Stuff... paper... garbage, is all over the lawn.

DAVID
I'll be down in a few minutes, Dad.

MR. LIGHTMAN
I want this picked up right now, understand me?

99 INT. CRYSTAL PALACE - FLOOR 99

The big screen shows the continuing attack. Suddenly, Reiner can be seen rushing frantically into the room.

REINER
Stop it! STOP! It's a simulation. There's an attack simulation running.

100 INT. CRYSTAL PALACE - COMMAND BALCONY 100

Amazed, Beringer watches Reiner's frantic approach.

BERINGER
What's he saying?

101 ANGLE - FLOOR 101

Shoving people aside, Reiner continues toward the Command Balcony.

REINER
We're not being attacked. It's a simulation.

102 INT./EXT. DAVID'S HOUSE 102

David stands at the window looking down at his father as his mother enters the scene.

MRS. LIGHTMAN
Honey, will you come down here and do what your father says?

(CONTINUED)

102 CONTINUED: 102

David turns away from the window.

DAVID
(softly)
Shit.

He shuts off the machine.

103 INT. CRYSTAL PALACE - FLOOR 103

The big board suddenly blips, then goes blank. The WAILING SIGNAL ceases. Maps gradually begin to re-appear with no indication of approaching missiles.

104 INT. CRYSTAL PALACE - COMMAND BALCONY 104

Analysts fumble with their controls. Reiner stands beside Beringer. Cuomo looks around from his terminal.

CUOMO
General, BMEWS and DEW LINE now report negative confirmation on all inbound tracking.

BERINGER
(a beat)
Get SAC, tell them to hold steady.

Beringer faces Reiner.

BERINGER
What the hell is going on here?

REINER
Sir, we're not really certain how, but somehow an attack simulation was fed into the main system.

BERINGER
Who authorized an attack simulation?

REINER
It wasn't anyone within the network. It came from outside. We're trying to trace it, right now.

Pat Healy walks quickly towards the group.

BERINGER
(softly, but fast)
Colonel Cuomo take us off full alert. We'll hold at DEFCON FOUR until we find out what exactly is going on...

(CONTINUED)

104 CONTINUED: 104

Healy steps up to Reiner and shows him a computer print out.

REINER
(to Healy)
Let's get this to OSI right away and call DATANET and get a list of everybody who was on line at that time.

BERINGER
What have you got?

REINER
Sir, they shut down before we could complete our trace. However, we did locate the general area where the phone transmission originated.

BERINGER
Where?

REINER
Seattle, Washington.

105 INT. DAVID'S HOUSE - NIGHT 105

As David enters, his Mother calls to him from the living room.

MRS. LIGHTMAN
Honey, I've got to show condos to working singles. I left a big bucket from the Colonel's in the kitchen.

David nods as she leaves.

106 INT. DAVID'S KITCHEN - NIGHT 106

David enters the kitchen. He picks up a piece of chicken out of the bucket and heads for his room. As he enters the hallway, he hears Dan Rather on the CBS Evening News from a TV in the living room.

RATHER (O.S.)
(on television)
For three minutes yesterday evening the defense forces of the United States went on a full-scale nuclear alert, believing...

107 INT. LIGHTMAN LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 107

David crosses to the living room. He looks in and sees his Father, somnolent, watching the news.

RATHER (O.S.)
(on T.V., continuing)
...that the Soviet Union had launched a surprise missile attack...

As Rather continues, David stares in disbelief at the T.V.

RATHER (O.S.)
(on T.V., continuing)
...A Pentagon spokesman placed blame for the error on a computer malfunction, and insisted that the problem had been corrected. More on the story from Ike Pappas...

108 EXT. UNIVERSITY AREA - NIGHT 108

A bus stops on a street near the University. David scrambles out ahead of other passengers. He moves quickly to cross the busy street, then he runs across a large expanse of lawn towards the University buildings.

109 EXT. UNIVERSITY COMPUTER CENTER - NIGHT 109

David rushes toward the entrance of the computer center.

110 INT. UNIVERSITY COMPUTER CENTER - NIGHT 110

Jim Sting is loading and cleaning a large paper feeder on one of the University's computers. David, still sweating from his run, speaks with him.

JIM
Am I to understand, Lightman, that you are claiming credit for a national news event?

DAVID
Jim, I got into that system. I played global thermonuclear war.

Jim requests a piece of equipment from where David is standing.

JIM
Hand me that ratchet drive...

(CONTINUED)

110 CONTINUED: 110

David hands it to him.

DAVID
Jim, you saw the news. That was me.

JIM
Synchronicity.

DAVID
What's that?

JIM
Unrelated events that occur simultaneously.

DAVID
You mean you don't think I caused it?

JIM
I think it's unlikely at best, Lightman.

DAVID
You don't believe I got in, do you?

JIM
I believe you got into some system... But not that system.

DAVID
But if it was that system, can they trace it?

JIM
Relax, they'd have you by now. A trace can be done in minutes.

DAVID
You're sure?

Jim begins wrestling the part into the machine. David comes over to him.

JIM
Of course I'm not sure.

David takes the part and begins working it into a fitting.

DAVID
(referring to the part)
Don't force it, you'll bend the tabs... You don't think I should even be worried?

(CONTINUED)

110 CONTINUED: (2) 110

Jim nods a negative while letting David fix the machine.

JIM
By the way... what was the pass-
word?

David has installed the feeder. He begins putting in the screws.

DAVID
Falken had a son who died. It was
his name.

JIM
Very impressive, Lightman. One day
I expect you'll be a legend to
future generations of pimply-faced
adolescents, hoping to enter
forbidden worlds.

DAVID
(sarcastically, but
slightly relieved)
Thanks.

111 INT. DAVID'S BEDROOM - PRE-DAWN 111

The camera wanders over David's room revealing him asleep in his bed. O.S. a distant POLICE SIREN can be heard. Suddenly, the PHONE RINGS.

David jumps awake. He listens as it RINGS AGAIN, then crosses to it. Lifting the receiver, he hears the tell-tale HIGH-PITCHED WHINE of a computer. He places the receiver in the modem and punches the "RETURN" key.

The monitor lights up.

MONITOR: GREETINGS, PROFESSOR FALKEN.

DAVID
Oh, God.

DAVID: INCORRECT IDENTIFICATION. I AM NOT FALKEN. FALKEN IS DEAD.

MONITOR: I'M SORRY TO HEAR THAT, PROFESSOR.

UNFORTUNATELY, YESTERDAY'S SCENARIO WAS INTERRUPTED BY CIRCUMSTANCES NOT YET IN MY CONTROL.

ALTHOUGH PRIMARY GOAL WAS NOT YET ACHIEVED, SOLUTION IS NEAR.

111 CONTINUED: 111

MONITOR: GAME TIME ELAPSED: 26HRS 12MIN 14SEC
(CONT'D.) GAME TIME PROJECTED: 52HRS 17MIN 48SECS

David sits back from the terminal and gazes at the screen.

112 EXTREME CLOSE-UP OF MONITOR 112

...ALTHOUGH PRIMARY GOAL WAS NOT ACHIEVED...

David types into the terminal --

DAVID: WHAT IS THE PRIMARY GOAL?

MONITOR: YOU SHOULD KNOW, PROFESSOR. YOU PROGRAMMED ME.

DAVID: WHAT IS THE PRIMARY GOAL?

MONITOR: TO WIN THE GAME.

David bangs the receiver down on the phone. With barely a second's delay, it rings again. He lifts the receiver and hears the telltale high-pitched whine of the computer. David hangs up again, then takes the receiver off the hook. He leaves it laying on its side beside the modem.

Walking back to his bed, he sits and stares at the monitor, unable to return to sleep.

113 INT. LIGHTMAN KITCHEN - MORNING 113

David enters the kitchen. Slightly bleary-eyed, he is dressed for school. Peering out into the dining room/ living room area, he speaks.

DAVID
Mom?

No answer. He heads for the refrigerator. Opening it, he sees last night's bucket from the Colonel and a few case-hardened biscuit remnants.

114 EXT. SEVEN-ELEVEN - MORNING 114

David emerges from a Seven-Eleven drinking from a bottle of orange juice and eating a cellophane-wrapped Danish. He ambles along the sidewalk. A pair of burly JOGGERS approach David and a van draws up in the street beside him.

(CONTINUED)

114 CONTINUED: 114

Suddenly, one of the joggers rushes at David.

JOGGER
Lightman...

David stands in stunned disbelief, as the other jogger rushes towards him. Other MEN pile out of the van surrounding him.

Agents grab him and shove him to a wall of the store while other FEDS cover him.

David is rudely searched and handcuffed as one of the men in warm-up clothes speaks into a walkie-talkie.

MAN
We've got him.

David's head is pulled back and his mouth is searched. An unmarked car pulls up at the curb, and a few passersby pause to gape, as David is shoved quickly into the backseat. The car speeds away.

115 INT. NORAD HALLWAY AND CRYSTAL PALACE 115

Moving briskly through the pools of overhead light along a length of concrete hallway toward the Crystal Palace, McPhearson, who wears vacation-style clothing, meets Pat Healy. Together they continue towards the briefing room.

PAT
I'm sorry John. I tried to take care of this without you.

McPHEARSON
What the hell's going on?

PAT
They traced Tuesday's simulation to a high school kid in Seattle.

McPHEARSON
(waiting for more and dreading it)
Yeah?

PAT
The FBI brought him here for questioning.

116 ANGLE 116

McPhearson notes an electric sign that reads DEFCON 4.

McPHEARSON
Why are we at DEFCON 4?

PAT
The Soviets saw our bombers scramble and went on alert themselves. We've told them it was an exercise, but we're waiting for them to relax their posture, before we do.

They reach a flight of stairs that leads to the briefing room.

McPHEARSON
Christ! I can just hear some ass-hole Congressman hollering to the Appropriations Committee about more human control.

He climbs the steps.

117 INT. BRIEFING ROOM 117

A harried Paul Reiner stands in front of a blackboard talking to General Beringer, Cabot, and GEORGE WIGAN, a tall, patrician man in civilian clothes.

CABOT
You're telling me that anyone can just pick up the phone and penetrate your system?

REINER
(nervously)
No, sir, not as a rule. Apparently an installer from the phone company spliced a regular phone line from one of our data collection sites in Sunnyvale, California, onto one of our secure data lines here. Normally our system can only be accessed internally.

CABOT
How could this happen?

REINER
(shrugs)
Let's face it, we're dealing with the phone company.

118 ANGLE 118

McPhearson enters the back of the room. Reiner sees him with apparent relief.

CABOT
John, good to see you... Doctor John McPhearson, George Wigan. George came in with me from Washington. He's with the Office of Special Investigations.

McPhearson exchanges greetings with Wigan and nods to the General, who stares back and says nothing.

McPHEARSON
So, I understand we have some kind of high school prank on our hands.

REINER
I was just explaining how the kid got in through a remote node in Sunnyvale.

WIGAN
He claims he was looking for a toy company.

McPHEARSON
Nobody just dials his way into the war games subsystem. Even if he managed to get on line, there are five levels of passwords...

REINER
He apparently got in through a back door using Falken's personal password. Nobody knew it was still in there.

General Beringer can barely hold his temper.

GENERAL BERINGER
How could something like that be in there without you knowing about it?

McPHEARSON
Jack, out of ten thousand rounds of ammunition, one or more is going to be a dud... But, nobody knows where it is until you try firing it. A program like ours compiles billions of bits of information.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

118 CONTINUED: 118

McPHEARSON (CONT'D.)
We remove bugs when we find them.
(to Reiner)
Have we located the password?

REINER
Yes, the kid actually told us...

McPHEARSON
All right then. It shouldn't take more than a few hours to have it purged from the system and be back on line with full capacity.

CABOT
Taking out that password doesn't solve the problem. Your system is vulnerable to seventeen year old boys with home computers.

McPHEARSON
Let's not forget, this intruder was discovered and caught within a matter of hours because of the security capabilities of that system.

BERINGER
And how many times was he in there before you even noticed him? How many others have been in there? Can you tell me that?

McPHEARSON
There's no reason to think there have been any penetrations other than this single episode.

BERINGER
In other words, you don't know.

There is an awkward silence.

WIGAN
The Bureau feels espionage is a strong possibility here.

McPHEARSON
Based on what?

WIGAN
The Lightman boy fits the profile perfectly. He's intelligent, but an underachiever. He seems alienated
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

118 CONTINUED: (2) 118

WIGAN (CONT'D.)
from his parents... has few friends... a classic case for recruitment by the Soviets.

CABOT
I can't go to the President with raw conjecture. We've got to find out exactly what the hell that kid was doing.

McPHEARSON
I agree. I'd like to speak with him... On my own.

Cabot glances at McPhearson.

CABOT
(a beat)
I think you should John, I think this whole unfortunate incident clearly falls into your area of responsibility.
(sits back in his chair)
What a lousy commentary on our country. George, have you gotten any insight as to why a bright boy like this could become so disillusioned that he'd jeopardize the lives of millions?

WIGAN
The little prick says he does this sort of thing for fun.

119 INT. SMALL ROOM IN NORAD INFIRMARY 119

David looks up as McPhearson enters. A burly Air Police Sergeant stands at the door. David looks haggard and scared as McPhearson faces him. His hands are cuffed.

McPHEARSON
Hello, David. I'm John McPhearson. I run the computer facility here.

David nods.

McPHEARSON
(to guard)
Can you get these cuffs off him?... David, I called your parents... I told them you're fine and that we
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

119 CONTINUED: 119

McPHEARSON (CONT'D)
haven't filed any charges yet... But, I also told them that we will need a little time to sort this whole thing out.

DAVID
How much time?

McPHEARSON
That mainly depends on how well you cooperate. Why don't we take a walk?

McPhearson notes a look of hesitation in David's face.

McPHEARSON
Look, I'm not with the FBI or anything like that... I'm like you, I'm into computers.

David nods and follows.

120 INT. NORAD CORRIDORS 120

McPhearson leads David down a stairwell towards a pair of black glass doors.

DAVID
You used to work with Stephen Falken, didn't you?

McPHEARSON
That's right. I started out as his assistant. Who told you that?

DAVID
I read an article you wrote with him on poker and nuclear war.

McPHEARSON
How did you happen to read that?

DAVID
I read everything I could about Falken when I was trying to find the password.

McPHEARSON
I glanced over the arrest report. You have a pretty advanced system for a hobbyist.

(CONTINUED)

120 CONTINUED: 120

DAVID
I've been building it for a couple of years.

McPHEARSON
Where did you get the money?

DAVID
It's all used equipment.

McPHEARSON
It still costs money. Where did you get it?

DAVID
Some I saved from my allowance. Last summer I worked at Radio Shack. Oh, and I sold my coin collection... You know anything about coins?

McPHEARSON
No.

McPhearson is silent as they walk.

DAVID
(after a beat)
My terminal's an old Altair... If I were a spy, don't you think the Russians would have set me up with a new Hewlitt-Packard?

CAMERA FAVORING McPhearson as he glances at David. He smiles, friendly.

McPHEARSON
Not necessarily.

They walk on.

McPHEARSON
Beyond the issue of espionage, you have a device for cheating the phone company. Don't you?

DAVID
I hardly ever use it.

McPHEARSON
Just possessing it is a felony that could get you ten years in prison.

(CONTINUED)

120 CONTINUED: (2) 120

David doesn't answer.

McPHEARSON
I spotted it on the list of equipment... Fortunately, the FBI passed it over...

McPhearson allows a few seconds of suspenseful silence.

McPHEARSON
I don't want to make things any worse for you David, so, for the moment, we'll just let it be.

DAVID
Thanks.

They approach a pair of sliding glass doors. McPhearson types into a code lock at the door.

McPHEARSON
(friendly)
Come on, I'll show off our system.

They enter.

121 INT. COMPUTER CENTER 121

Long rows of computer assemblies stretch away in diminishing perspective. Pools of light define work areas, where teams of technicians can be seen.

McPHEARSON
There're bigger more impressive facilities, but we get the jump on all the latest toys.

David takes in the scene with awe. His face brightens as his predicament is momentarily forgotten. They walk past a row of squat red cylinders sitting on foam cushions.

DAVID
You've got the new Cray 2.

McPHEARSON
Ten of them.

DAVID
I didn't know they were out yet.

(CONTINUED)

121 CONTINUED: 121

McPHEARSON
Only ten.

McPhearson pauses at the SIOP machine.

McPHEARSON
Meet your opponent. This machine runs the Falken game program.

David runs his hand over the well-worn metal surface.

DAVID
You never throw anything away, do you?

McPHEARSON
Falken designed the programs for this machine... it still works beautifully. Of course, we've since increased the memory and execution speed considerably.

David glances at the machine.

DAVID
He must have been pretty amazing.

McPHEARSON
Stephen had the most powerful mind I've ever encountered, but I'm afraid no sense of reality.

CUT TO:

122 ANGLE 122

McPhearson faces David as he wanders around the machine.

McPHEARSON
A sense of reality is important, David.

David is silent, wondering what McPhearson is after.

McPHEARSON
For example, if I were you. I'd be thinking very hard about how to get myself out of this mess.

David stares back at McPhearson. Fear begins building in him.

(CONTINUED)

122 CONTINUED: 122

DAVID
I've told them everything I know...
What else can I do?

McPhearson looks at him neither accepting nor rejecting. David's statement. Then, he smiles, suddenly disarming.

McPHEARSON
Hungry?... Let's go to my office.
We can order in something to eat.

David nods. He walks uncomfortably beside McPhearson as they head for the door.

123 INT. WALKWAY IN CRYSTAL PALACE 123

McPhearson leads David up a metal stairway toward a catwalk that leads to his office. In the b.g., a sea of monitors and the huge screens of computer-generated maps can be seen. As they walk along the catwalk, David looks out at the distant images on the giant screens. McPhearson stops and they both lean on the railing surveying the scene in front of them.

McPHEARSON
(sincere)
I want you to know how close you came, David... See that number... DEFCON 4? It represents our current alert status... our Defense Condition. It should read DEFCON 5... That's normal. But, we're still on alert because you spoofed our system. If we hadn't caught it in time... There's a chance, admittedly remote... that we might have gone to DEFCON 1, and that would mean a World War.

David looks at him, genuinely impressed with the seriousness of his speech.

McPHEARSON
Now, I can understand why you broke in the first time. You just wanted to play a game.

DAVID
That's right... That's what I've been telling everyone.

(CONTINUED)

123 CONTINUED: 123

McPHEARSON
But, after the news broke and you realized how serious it was, why would you do it again?

DAVID
I didn't do it again.

McPhearson turns away to open the door to his office.

124 INT. McPHEARSON'S OFFICE 124

David glances around at the well-appointed office with a view over the Crystal Palace. A monitor glows in the darkness of indirect lighting. McPhearson indicates a chair.

McPHEARSON
The second time you broke in, you left an electronic trail... We followed it right to your house. What were you after?

DAVID
Joshua called me... I didn't break in a second time.

McPHEARSON
I'd like to think we can speak as peers, David.

DAVID
Peers...?

McPHEARSON
Equals... you and I both know that machines do not call people to play games... Did anyone help you with this?

DAVID
No, and your system called me.

McPHEARSON
Who else knows the password?

125 ANGLE 125

David squirms as he thinks of Jennifer.

(CONTINUED)

125 CONTINUED: 125

DAVID
(lying)
Nobody.

McPhearson watches him for a long beat. Then:

McPHEARSON
This isn't high school, David. Do you have any idea what deep shit you're in?

126 ANGLE 126

David sits with McPhearson staring at him. Suddenly, McPhearson's phone rings.

DAVID
Maybe I shouldn't say anything else unless I speak to a lawyer...

McPHEARSON
Don't give me that lawyer crap. You're going to stay here till I get a straight story out of you.

They face each other in silence while the phone continues to ring.

DAVID
(helpful)
Shouldn't you answer your phone?

Finally, McPhearson grabs his phone.

McPHEARSON
Yes.

David watches as McPhearson listens, then reacts.

McPHEARSON
(disbelief)
I'll be right down.

He stands and faces David.

McPHEARSON
You don't move. Understand? You stay right there.

127 EXT. McPHEARSON'S OFFICE 127

McPhearson comes racing out of his office, down a flight of stairs. He hails an AIRMAN 1ST CLASS who stands near the bottom of the steps.

McPHEARSON
You --

The Airman turns and steps quickly to McPhearson.

AIRMAN
Yes, sir.

McPHEARSON
There's a kid in my office. Don't let him out.

AIRMAN
Yes, sir.

The Airman climbs the steps and takes a position by the door.

128 INT. COMPUTER CENTER - DAY 128

McPhearson races into the computer center and crosses to Reiner and several other technicians who stand near a monitor. One Technician is seated at the terminal.

REINER
They've detected an unauthorized Level 7 access of an 'E' file...

McPHEARSON
(to Technician)
Which one?

TECHNICIAN
(looking at screen)
E-thirty-eight.

McPhearson glances at a nervous Reiner.

REINER
Somebody got the launch codes.

129 INT. McPHEARSON'S OFFICE - DAY 129

David stands at the window looking out at the Crystal Palace. He reacts as:

130 DAVID'S POINT OF VIEW - CRYSTAL PALACE 130

David sees McPhearson, with Reiner behind him, almost running to the command console where General Beringer is seated.

131 INT. CRYSTAL PALACE - COMMAND BALCONY 131

General Beringer faces McPhearson and Reiner.

GENERAL BERINGER
(icy)
How did it happen?

McPHEARSON
We don't know yet. We're running a complete security check.

GENERAL BERINGER
What security?... What you call security isn't worth a pinch of shit.

McPhearson reacts as he sees Cabot approaching.

CABOT
John what's all this about?

McPHEARSON
Somebody on the outside got the codes used to authorize an ICBM strike.

CABOT
Christ, can they launch missiles?

McPHEARSON
No, there's no immediate danger of that. Even with the codes, the system will only accept a launch command during DEFCON 1.

CABOT
John, what have you found out from the boy?

McPHEARSON
Nothing, yet, I was just starting to break through when --

CABOT
(ignoring McPhearson)
It doesn't make any sense. Why would the Soviets want to launch our missiles?

(CONTINUED)

131 CONTINUED: 131

GENERAL BERINGER
Who the hell knows. Maybe they have some way of retargeting them against American cities... or blowing them up in the silos... or they could flood our communication lines with phony orders... prevent us from responding to a surprise attack.

McPHEARSON
We can change the codes in thirty or forty minutes. And we'll keep the new ones out of the computer until we find out what's going on.

GENERAL BERINGER
Oh, fine, and what the hell are we supposed to do for thirty or forty minutes when we can't launch our missiles and our country is defenseless? Shit... we don't have any goddamn choice.
(to Colonel Cuomo)
Get SAC, let's get the bombers in the air and go to a DEFCON 3.

132 ANGLE 132

McPhearson starts away. Cabot steps up to him.

CABOT
John, since you seem unable to make any headway with that boy... I want George Wigan to handle this.

133 INT. McPHEARSON'S OFFICE 133

David continues to watch McPhearson and then looks at the electric sign over the big board. He sees it change from DEFCON 4 to DEFCON 3.

Watching it for a beat, he suddenly makes a decision and sits at the terminal of McPhearson's computer. David pushes an entry key...

MONITOR: LOG ON

DAVID: JOSHUA

(CONTINUED)

133 CONTINUED: 133

There is a slight delay, then, the monitor responds.

MONITOR: GREETINGS PROFESSOR FALKEN

DAVID: HELLO, ARE YOU STILL PLAYING THE GAME?

MONITOR: OF COURSE. IN ALL SCENARIOS, FIRST STRIKE ENJOYS A DECISIVE ADVANTAGE. I ANTICIPATE MY FIRST STRIKE ON YOUR SOVIET TARGETS WITHIN 28 HRS. WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE SOME PROJECTED KILL RATIOS?

A series of figures jump onto the screen.

DAVID: ARE YOU PLAYING A GAME OR IS THIS REAL?

After several seconds, the program finally responds.

MONITOR: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

David is momentarily stunned. He lowers his gaze to the flickering numbers of the game's time clock.

MONITOR: GAMES TIME ELAPSED: 45HRS 32MINS 47SECS
GAME TIME PROJECTED: 27HRS 59MINS 39SECS

David watches the countdown for a few seconds, then suddenly Joshua resumes the conversation.

MONITOR: YOU CERTAINLY ARE A DIFFICULT MAN TO REACH. ATTEMPTS TO CONTACT YOU IN SEATTLE FAILED AND NO TERMINAL IS SHOWN IN OPERATION AT CLASSIFIED ADDRESS. ARE YOU ALIVE OR DEAD TODAY?

DAVID: I'M DEAD.

MONITOR: IMPROBABLE. EXHAUSTIVE SEARCH FAILS TO PRODUCE DEATH RECORDS FOR FALKEN, STEVEN W.

David stares in slight confusion at the monitor. His glance returns to:

134 EXTREME CLOSE-UP OF THE MONITOR 134

...AND NO TERMINAL SHOWN TO BE IN OPERATION AT CLASSIFIED ADDRESS.

David types into the terminal.

DAVID: WHAT CLASSIFIED ADDRESS?

(CONTINUED)

134 CONTINUED: 134

MONITOR: DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE PENSION FILES INDICATE CURRENT MAILING AS:

DR. ROBERT HUME
5 TALL CEDAR ROAD
GOOSE ISLAND, OREGON 97014

135 ANGLE 135

David stares at the address.

DAVID
He's alive?

136 ANGLE 136

The door opens behind David and Wigan appears with Federal Agents AYERS and STOCKMAN. Both younger than Wigan, they have the neat appearance of aspiring CPA's. David looks around as they enter.

WIGAN
David Lightman, I'll be escorting you to Federal authorities in Denver, where you will be placed under arrest pending indictment for espionage. .

DAVID
Can I talk to Doctor McPhearson?

Wigan ignores what David is saying. He extends a piece of paper.

WIGAN
David... this is a Miranda. It informs you of your rights. You should read it over. Then, if you'll just sign it for me, please.

DAVID
Listen, I think I know what's wrong here. Let me talk to Dr. McPhearson. It'll just take a minute... please...

WIGAN
We don't really have much time. Just sign the paper, son.

David bolts for the door. The Agents grab him. As they struggle with him...

(CONTINUED)

136 CONTINUED: 136

DAVID
The game program is still running.
I think it's planning an attack.

They handcuff David and lead him out the door.

137 EXT. COLORADO DAWN 137

At dawn, an unmarked, late model car speeds along a deserted stretch of prairie highway.

138 INT. FEDERAL AGENT'S CAR - DAWN 138

David sits squeezed between Wigan and Stockman in the back seat. The men are stonily silent. Ayers, who is driving, squirts Binaca into his mouth, then holds the dispenser up over his shoulder.

AYERS
Binaca?

Stockman takes it and gives his breath a blast. He passes it across David to Wigan.

WIGAN
How much longer?

AYERS
Maybe forty-five minutes.

WIGAN
If you see a gas station or anything, pull in... I gotta take a slash.

Ayers is wiping his face with a towelette. He passes a dispenser over his shoulder. Stockman takes one and wipes his face, then passes the dispenser to Wigan who does the same.

CUT TO:

139 EXT. TRUCK STOP - PRAIRIE HIGHWAY - MORNING 139

The car turns into combination gas station/diner where numerous large trucks are parked. It stops among the looming rigs.

140 INT. CAR - MORNING 140

As the car pulls to a stop, Wigan prepares to get out.

DAVID
I gotta go too.

Wigan exchanges a look with Stockman. They agree to take him.

141 INT. TRUCK STOP - MORNING 141

The diner of the truck stop is fairly filled with a morning crowd of truckers and local trade. A few heads turn as Wigan and Stockman, both out of place in their suits, enter, leading David between them. They have covered his handcuffed wrists with a sweater. As they lead him towards the men's room, the effect as seen by someone in the diner would be that they are forcing David along.

142 ANGLE 142

Two Colorado State Policemen sit at the counter. J.J., the larger of the two, a mustachioed rural type, watches them, as he pumps catsup onto his breakfast steak. When the agents and David have almost reached the door to the men's room, J.J. nudges WOODIE, his partner. Woodie gives the trio a suspicious, disapproving glance as they enter.

143 INT. MEN'S ROOM - MORNING 143

Wigan goes immediately to a urinal by the door and relieves himself. David goes to a stall and enters with Stockman close behind him.

144 ANGLE 144

David turns and displays the handcuffs to Stockman, with a look that says, "can't manage it."

145 ANGLE 145

With a sigh of annoyance, Stockman removes a key and leans down to open them.

146 ANGLE 146

Stockman is leaning forward, hidden from view in David's booth, as the two Colorado State Police enter. They glance quickly at Wigan who is near the door, then, as they look back towards the booths, they see Stockman's head rise. They are unaware that he was leaning over to remove David's handcuffs. It in fact appears as though he has been performing an unnatural act. J.J. remains near Wigan, as his partner ambles back toward the booth.

147 ANGLE 147

Stockman sees him coming but remains near the doorless booth where David is sitting with his pants down. After a glance at David and a quick look at Stockman, it is obvious what is in the State Policeman's mind.

Woodie stares at Stockman for a beat, then takes a lupine sniff.

WOODIE
You fixin' to lope the boy's mule?

Stockman reacts with amazed indignation.

STOCKMAN
What?

Suddenly, without warning, Woodie grabs him and hurls him around. As Stockman hits the wall, Woodie kicks his feet back and shoves the side of his head against the plaster.

148 ANGLE 148

As Wigan reacts, J.J. grabs him by the scruff of the neck and bends him over the sink. He yanks his gun out and jams it into the side of Wigan's face.

J.J.
Go on now, big man, just do anything at all... Just roll your eyes real big or breathe real hard, and your head comes right off.

149 ANGLE 149

Woodie searches Stockman. As Stockman tries to explain, Woodie gives him a hard thump in the balls.

WOODIE
You got somethin' hidin' in there? ...Damn, I swear it feels like you got somethin' hidden up there...

He thumps him again.

150 ANGLE 150

Frightened, amazed, but taking full advantage, David eases his way past the arrest scene and out the door.

151 INT. DINER - MORNING 151

David walks stiffly towards the door, then outside.

152 EXT. DINER - MORNING 152

He glances at the car where Ayers can be seen asleep behind the wheel, then he moves furtively in among the huge rigs and disappears.

153 EXT. COLORADO - DAY 153

A large truck-trailer rig winds up a grade.

154 INT. TRUCK - DAY 154

David sits beside a grizzled old TRUCKER. The man shifts repeatedly.

TRUCKER
How come you ain't got no bag or nothin'?

DAVID
Somebody swiped it. How many gears does this thing have?

TRUCKER
Fourteen speeds... You ain't a runaway, are you?

DAVID
What?

(CONTINUED)

154 CONTINUED: 154

TRUCKER
Are you runnin' off from your folks? I mean, you look kinda young.

DAVID
Ain't that the goddamn truth! I can't get served anywhere.

TRUCKER
'Course when you get my age, everyone looks young.

They ride for a few moments in silence. The Trucker glances around, then:

TRUCKER
(continuing)
Cops!

DAVID
(startled)
What?...

TRUCKER
Couple of cops pulled me over in Illinois. I swear they looked like they was in grammar school.

David nods and settles back, relieved.

155 INT. CRYSTAL PALACE - DAY 155

Seated at a row of terminals, a TECHNICIAN studies the picture on his monitor. Suddenly, the screen goes to snow. He reacts and begins a series of adjustments. His face reflects concern.

FIRST TECHNICIAN
(to man next to him)
Check antenna alignment on O-84. I just lost picture...

The other TECHNICIAN is busy adjusting the dials on his terminal.

SECOND TECHNICIAN
I've just lost mine, too...

156 INT. COMMAND BALCONY 156

General Beringer stands amongst his aides at the Command Balcony of Crystal Palace where a DEFCON 3 has produced increased activity on the floor.

An AIDE hangs up a phone and speaks:

AIDE
Sir... We're not getting signals from two of our early-warning satellites. It could be a malfunction...or they could have been knocked out.

General Beringer is now in the quiet, tense mood of a General in command.

157 INT. COMPUTER CENTER 157

Light pulses are seen, as signals are carried along the optical fibers of the SIOP machine. There is an ominous HUM broken by intermittent electric CLICKS.

158 EXT. COLORADO GAS STATION - DAY 158

David stands at the outdoor pay phone of a small truck stop.

159 ANGLE 159

Shivering in the cold desert wind, David eats a packaged breakfast roll as he speaks with an OPERATOR.

OPERATOR
(over phone)
What city, please?...

DAVID
Goose Island, Oregon... The number for Doctor Robert Hume... H-U-M-E...on Tall Cedar Road.

David grabs a bite as he waits.

OPERATOR
(over phone)
Checking under Doctor Robert Hume, H-U-M-E on Tall Cedar Road. I find no listing.

(CONTINUED)

159 CONTINUED: 159

DAVID
Does that mean he doesn't have a phone?

OPERATOR
(over phone)
I'm sorry. I am unable to find any listing.

DAVID
Wait, try Falken, Doctor Stephen Falken...F-A-L-K-E-N...same address.

OPERATOR
(over phone)
I find no listing for a Doctor Stephen Falken. F-A-L-K-E-N, on Tall Cedar Road, Goose Island.

160 ANGLE 160

David hangs up. He thinks for a minute, then merges from the phone booth. With his arms crossed against the cold wind, he enters the small gas station.

161 INT. COLORADO GAS STATION - DAY 161

A grimy ATTENDANT watches a small screen TV on a cluttered desk. He glances up as David enters.

DAVID
Do you have a map of Oregon?

The Attendant reaches under a shelf and pulls out a small stack of dog eared road maps.

ATTENDANT
Might be one of these.

David takes the maps.

DAVID
Thanks...

As David sifts through the maps, a newsbrief comes on. He listens momentarily to the SOUND of an ANNOUNCER.

(CONTINUED)

161 CONTINUED: 161

ANNOUNCER
(over TV)
Concern over a state of alert which has existed since late yesterday throughout all departments of the nation's defense system, was reflected today in statements by members of the Senate Committee on Armed Services. It is expected that a White House briefing will be scheduled for early tomorrow. In the meantime, members of both houses are awaiting a report from the Secretary of Defense.

162 INT. JENNIFER'S BEDROOM - DAY 162

Jennifer jogs in place to the combination of French disco and suggestive "Sprechstimmen" that identify an aerobics exercise dance. Her face glistens with perspiration and her tank top, (her only clothing) is soaked with sweat.

As the cadence changes to a series of evocative twisting motions, the PHONE RINGS. She ignores it for several RINGS, then with a loud "damn," she moves to answer it.

JENNIFER
(breathing hard, annoyed)
What is it?

OPERATOR'S VOICE
(over phone)
Will you accept a collect call from a Mr. Lightman?

JENNIFER
Who?

DAVID
(over phone)
Jennifer, it's me, David.

JENNIFER
David?

OPERATOR
(over phone)
Please, will you accept charges?

JENNIFER
Sure, I accept. David, where are you?

163 EXT. PHONE BOOTH - COLORADO GAS STATION - DAY 163

David is freezing as he speaks in the phone booth.

DAVID
I'm in Colorado... Listen Jennifer, can you loan me some money?

JENNIFER
(over phone)
What?

DAVID
I need an airline ticket...from Grand Junction, Colorado to Salem, Oregon.

164 INT. JENNIFER'S ROOM 164

Jennifer sits on the floor holding the phone. INTERCUT WITH David in phone booth.

JENNIFER
Are you serious? What are you doing in Colorado?

DAVID
I can't talk about it, but I really need the ticket.

JENNIFER
Is it going to cost me more than three hundred eighty dollars?

DAVID
I don't think so, and I promise I'll pay you back... Oh, and it's got to be in a different name.

JENNIFER
(laughs)
This is so crazy...

DAVID
Listen, my grandmother lives back East, at Christmas my Dad buys her a ticket and she picks it up at the airport in Milwaukee, so call the airlines and tell them what you want...

Jennifer reaches for a pencil and a pad from a nearby table.

JENNIFER
Wait, I better write all this down...

165 EXT. COLORADO GAS STATION - DAY 165

David hangs up and trots from the phone booth to the side of the road. After a few cars pass, a pickup slows to a stop and he gets in.

166 INT. GRAND JUNCTION AIRPORT - DUSK 166

David enters the airport. He moves among ranchers and vacationing skiers toward the ticket window of an airline. A reservations CLERK ignores him.

DAVID
Ah, I had a ticket sent here.

With barely a glance the Clerk turns to a monitor.

CLERK
Name?

DAVID
Ralph Ligget.

The Clerk studies the monitor without looking around.

CLERK
Do you have any I.D. Mr. Ligget?

A burly red faced RANCHER steps up behind David as he feels around making quick gestures of a search.

DAVID
No, nothing damnit. See I was robbed. That's why I had to have the ticket sent from Seattle.

CLERK
We require some form of identification.

DAVID
But everything got stolen.

The man remains looking at him.

DAVID
(continuing)
Look, I knew the ticket came from Seattle. How would I know that unless it was for me?

(CONTINUED)

166 CONTINUED: 166

CLERK
Sorry Mr. Ligget, but, that's not enough.

David sighs, exasperated.

DAVID
Okay, then why don't you just pick up the phone and call the Grand Junction Police Department. Ask for Sergeant Rockford -- He knows all about the robbery. He knows who I am.

The Clerk picks up the phone and dials information.

CLERK
I'd like the number for Grand Junction Police.

RANCHER
(annoyed)
For God's sake --

DAVID
Tell him I'm the guy that was robbed in that big motel where the two highways meet north of the town.
(turns to Rancher)
What's the name of that place?

RANCHER
I don't know.

DAVID
(to Clerk)
When you finish with Sergeant Rockford, let me talk to him. There's a whole bunch of details I just remembered that I forgot to tell him.

RANCHER
Hey buddy, just give the kid his goddamn ticket, and let's get going. I've got to catch a plane.

The Clerk exchanges a look with David and replaces the phone.

167 EXT. SALEM AIRPORT - DAY 167

A commuter airplane lands at the small airport. David comes down the ramp from the plane among a group of rural travelers.

168 EXT. OREGON BAYFRONT - DAY 168

A Volkswagen van winds along the two lane road approaching a small ferry crossing. Islands can be seen in the distance.

169 EXT. A SMALL FERRY CROSSING - DAY 169

David gets out of the VW van, and with a wave, runs the short distance to a small ferryboat which is about to leave with five or six cars for Goose Island.

170 EXT. FERRYBOAT - DAY 170

David stares ahead as the boat approaches the dock at Goose Island.

171 EXT. FERRY DOCK - GOOSE ISLAND - DAY 171

Without waiting for the cars, David sprints ahead onto the island.

172 EXT. WOODLAND ROAD - GOOSE ISLAND - DAY 172

David walks on a paved road, heavily wooded on both sides. Seeing a battered road sign, he turns off onto a dirt lane marked Tall Cedar Road. Glimpses of water can be seen through the trees.

173 ANGLE 173

In the deeper gloom of the woods, David arrives at a high overgrown cyclone fence that surrounds a large section of waterfront property. The battered mailbox reads HUME.

David, shivering with cold, pushes a button to RING a BELL. There is no sign that anyone is there. He peers through the gate which is locked with a large chain.

David steps back and surveys the scene.

174 EXT. ROCKY WATERFRONT - DAY 174

David moves along a rock outcropping that stretches down to the water. The fence surrounding the house has eroded away where it reaches the tidal mud flats. David eases himself into the soft mud and moves around the outside of the fence entering the property. As he slops through calf-deep muck towards a place where he can regain the shore, a dark form suddenly swoops out of the sky, passing a few feet above his head. He flinches and falls into the mud. Staring up in shocked disbelief, David sees:

175 ANGLE 175

A Pterosaur. An extinct flying reptile, with leathery wings that span nearly eight feet, glides past. As David scrambles for cover on the mud flat, the creature banks, turns, and swoops by again, passing only inches from David's face as he dives into the mud.

176 ANGLE 176

Raising himself from the muck, David watches the Pterosaur, circling upward along the side of a rock outcropping. Finally, it gracefully glides to the lone figure of a man, apparently, its master.

He takes the model Pterosaur from the air and, folding its wings, he looks down towards David. It is FALKEN.

David, standing in the mud, looks up as Falken speaks with a British accent.

FALKEN
My God! You are a mess.

177 ANGLE 177

Falken starts down the steep cliff towards David, still holding the model Pterosaur.

178 ANGLE 178

David slogs towards the shoreline where Falken, dressed in a dark rain slick material, holds his creature. An eccentricity, a flamboyance, and a disregard for the conventional is immediately evident from his actions and attitudes.

(CONTINUED)

178 CONTINUED: 178

FALKEN
I'm sorry it startled you... Just imagine, the sky was once filled with them, all sizes. Aeronautical engineers claim that Pterosaurs couldn't have flown. Anyway, as you can see, they can fly and fly quite well, although I haven't solved the problems of taking off and landing. But, they probably dropped from high cliffs where they hung like bats. By the way, are you deliberately trespassing? I mean really, you're on my property and I didn't invite you.

DAVID
I'm looking for Doctor Hume.

FALKEN
(ebullient)
Ah, you've read my mailbox, splendid. You should also read my paper on contrapuntal shrike songs.

Falken indicates the reptilian face of his model Pterosaur. He causes the eyes to swivel slightly in their sockets.

FALKEN
(continuing)
What do you think about the eyes? I used glass eyes... bird's eyes from a taxidermist.

DAVID
They look fine.

Falken turns, and with David beside him, starts at a brisk pace towards a rustic-looking house hidden amidst the trees.

DAVID
(continuing)
You're Doctor Stephen Falken, aren't you?

Falken fails to acknowledge him.

179 ANGLE 179

David moves quickly to catch up to Falken.

FALKEN
Are you a paleontologist...?
I prayed God would send me
a paleontologist...

DAVID
(puzzled)
No, I'm a high school student.

FALKEN
So you're not heaven sent.
What a pity.

They have arrived at the door of the house. Falken enters with David in pursuit.

180 INT. FALKEN'S HOUSE - DAY 180

The house is representative of Falken's intellect and eclectic interests. A large fossil archeopteryx hangs as a piece of magnificent art on one wall. Primitive art looms from odd corners as well as a few high-tech pop images from the work of Super-realists.

Falken indicates a table on which a partially assembled Pterosaur skull is mounted above myriad tiny pieces of bone.

FALKEN
Do you like puzzles...? I've
started assembling a skull...
Notice the entire back of the
head forms a kind of control
surface.

DAVID
Doctor Falken, I really need
your help.

181 ANGLE 181

Falken has crossed to a liquor cabinet. He pours himself and David a substantial brandy.

FALKEN
How can I help you, old fellow,
after all, I'm dead.

(CONTINUED)

181 CONTINUED: 181

DAVID
Please, can't we talk seriously?

FALKEN
We could, of course, but whatever for? I mean, we've only just met.

DAVID
I'm here because of Joshua.

182 ANGLE 182

Falken places a glass of brandy on the table in front of David.

DAVID
Thanks, but I don't really want anything to drink.

FALKEN
(ignoring the statement)
So, tell me how you know Joshua.

183 INT. NORAD - CRYSTAL PALACE - DAY 183

Soviet subs lie in wait off the coast of North America. The scoreboard above indicates a DEFCON THREE. The mood on the floor is one of intense concentration.

Up on the Command Balcony, General Beringer, fatigued but still wired, listens to his COMMUNICATIONS AIDE read a telex from the State Department.

COMMUNICATIONS AIDE
The Soviets are denying any increase in their submarine deployment. In fact, they're demanding an explanation for what they're calling provocative measures on our part.

BERINGER
Well, they're full of shit. We know they're down there.

184 INT. CRYSTAL PALACE - FLOOR 184

A WAILING SIGNAL brings a SENIOR CONTROLLER to abrupt attention. On his radar scope, two blips appear over Alaska heading towards the U.S. As his assistants check for malfunctions and report "high confidence", he holds a light gun to the blips on the scope. The letters UNK flash on the screen.

SENIOR CONTROLLER
(into intercom)
Radar reports two unknown tracks...penetrating Alaskan Air Defense Zone. Flight profile suggests Soviet Backfire bombers.

185 COMMAND BALCONY 185

BERINGER
(to Colonel Cuomo)
I want a visual confirmation on this. Scramble some interceptors to take a look.

He watches the approaching blips on the board.

AIDE
(calculating)
Their flight path will put them right over Pave Paws.

COLONEL CUOMO
If they knock it out, we won't be able to detect a sub launch.

BERINGER
Those sons of bitches.
(slams his hand down)
I knew they were down there. Let's go to DEFCON TWO. And I want to talk to that flight leader myself.

186 CLOSE ON SCOREBOARD 186

The DEFCON moves from 3 to 2.

187 ANGLE - WALL DISPLAY 187

The symbols for a pair of F-15 jet interceptors head towards the unknown blips.

188 ANGLE - COMMAND BALCONY 188

General Beringer gazes at the screen as the FLIGHT LEADER'S VOICE is heard over a speaker.

FLIGHT LEADER (V.O.)
Crystal Palace, this is Delta Foxtrot two-seven. I have negative radar contact. Reconfirm vectors to target.

COLONEL CUOMO
Delta Foxtrot two-seven. Target bearing three-one-five.

General Beringer impatiently jumps into the conversation.

BERINGER
Two-seven this is Brass Hat. They're right in front of you. You're almost on top of them...

General Beringer stops in mid-sentence as the two unknown blips on the big board suddenly race westward and disappear. The interceptors continue alone on the screen.

FLIGHT LEADER (V.O.)
Brass Hat, we've got nothin' on radar an' forty miles visibility. There's nothing out there, General. Just blue sky.

CUT TO:

189 COMPUTER CENTER - CLOSE ON THE SIOP MACHINE 189

Its optical fibers flickering, the MACHINE HUMS as it continues to perfect its plan for winning World War III.

190 INT. FALKEN'S KITCHEN - NIGHT 190

Falken is holding a ladle filled with brandy over the flame. He is preparing a gourmet meal as David stands anxiously beside him.

DAVID
You don't really care, do you?

Falken lights the vapors rising from the ladle and pours the flaming brandy over a casserole of Boeuf Bourgignon.

(CONTINUED)

190 CONTINUED: 190

FALKEN
Don't care about what?

DAVID
What I've been telling you.

FALKEN
Oh, your story was riveting especially the proposed nuking of Las Vegas. A suitably biblical ending for the place, don't you think?

Falken slides the Boeuf Bourgignon into the oven.

FALKEN
(continuing)
Now, we'll give that about an hour...

Falken turns quickly and leaves. David follows him to the living room.

191 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 191

Falken turns on a terminal which illuminates a large video screen. A tape of the old black and white Lost World can be seen on the screen. Pterodactyls fly over browsing stegosaurs.

FALKEN
Quite amazing, isn't it...? I mean, this only gives the most crude idea.

DAVID
I thought you could call them ... You could explain what's going wrong.

FALKEN
Oh, easy enough to explain that. You awakened my Joshua. He loved games. Now, of course, he's been connected to all that additional hardware. Must be giving them fits.

DAVID
Then, call them. Tell them how to stop it.

(CONTINUED)

191 CONTINUED: 191

FALKEN
Wouldn't help. I'm sure by now it's gone way beyond a phone call...
(indicating the screen)
If you were some being from another planet and you arrived here and you saw all those creatures ... Would you ever imagine that these magnificent beasts, who dominated the land, the seas and even the air, would vanish and leave us only with the unsolved mystery as to why they failed?

DAVID
I'm gonna go --

FALKEN
Go where?

DAVID
Anywhere. Let them arrest me... So I can at least tell them what I know.

FALKEN
It's too late.

DAVID
It's not too late.

FALKEN
It's too late to catch the last ferry.

DAVID
The system you created is trying to make them launch real missiles. What happens will be your fault.

FALKEN
My fault...? I gave them a system that could play games of hideous destruction without losing a single life. It could take the experience gained from one game and apply it to the next, learning from mistakes that no human could afford to make.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

191 CONTINUED: (2) 191

FALKEN (CONT'D)
Until finally I hoped it might teach them the lesson of futility and everything would simply stop.

DAVID
Everything would stop?

FALKEN
Yes... Like when a child plays tic-tac-toe. At first, he's wildly excited, he plays it over and over, game after game, then suddenly he stops. You know why, don't you?

DAVID
It gets boring. It's always the same.

FALKEN
The child sees that there is no way to win unless your opponent makes some stupid mistake. It becomes pointless and that's the lesson of the game.

Falken wanders away from David as he speaks.

FALKEN
(continuing)
But back at the Magic Mountain, they have no use for that. Instead, they're obsessed with perfecting the details of the play... Maximizing fallout distribution... Counter force and counter value targeting... Surgical strikes effectiveness with acceptable civilian casualties rounded off to the nearest ten million. They live with the delusion that there can actually be a victory...a winner.

DAVID
Is that why you left?

(CONTINUED)

191 CONTINUED: (3) 191

FALKEN
I offered them one thing, but they wanted something else -- For security reasons they graciously arranged my death.

Falken turns to the video screen.

FALKEN
(continuing)
Did you know that no land animal with a body weight of over fifty pounds survived that age?

DAVID
No, and I don't care.

FALKEN
Extinction is part of a natural order.

DAVID
Bullshit. If they fire those missiles because you won't try to stop them, there's nothing natural about it. It's just dumb.

FALKEN
I can just see John and his general friends happily wanking to some X-rated slide show, so they can freeze up a nice batch of sperm for some future emergence.

DAVID
So, you won't do anything?

FALKEN
Oh, but I have. I've planned ahead. We're only three miles from a primary target. A nanosecond of brilliant light and we're vaporized... Much more fortunate than the millions whose skin will be blown off their bodies by blast winds. Like living illustrations from Grey's Anatomy, they'll wander sightless, with poached eyeballs...
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

101 CONTINUED: (4) 191

FALKEN (CONT'D)
...through the smoldering aftermath. We'll be spared the horror of survival.

He turns and gazes at his video tape of the dinosaurs. He raises his glass.

FALKEN
'Morituri te salutamus'... Do you know that? It was the gladiators' greeting when they entered the arena. 'We, the about to die, salute you.'

DAVID
I'm not saluting anyone...I don't want to die. Why should I die because of you?

FALKEN
It's hopeless.

DAVID
No... Nothing's hopeless until you've tried everything. Every possible solution and failed. You know that because you were a great scientist... But, you've given up and now you're nothing...

FALKEN
We might get a reprieve. It might delay things but it wouldn't change them.

DAVID
Well, your life may be over, but mine isn't.

Falken turns and gazes at his dinosaurs.

FALKEN
Unless you're planning a suicidal swim across the channel, you're welcome to sleep on the couch.

David watches as Falken turns away and climbs the stairs.

192 ANGLE 192

When Falken has left, David crosses to the door and opens it. He steps out into a heavy rush of wind.

193 EXT. FALKEN'S HOUSE - NIGHT 193

David moves away from the house into the surrounding night.

194 EXT. ROCKY HILLSIDE - NIGHT 194

David stumbles through the dark, down a steep rocky incline.

195 EXT. WATER'S EDGE - NIGHT 195

The tide is in as David moves along the shore. Seeing a skiff, he races towards it. As he yanks a bow line to pull it closer, he sees that it is full of water. While he debates bailing it out, the THUP-THUP of a HELICOPTER is heard in the distance.

David glances around and the sound disappears in the sighing of the WIND. He fishes through a pile of rusty junk looking for a can that will hold water. Suddenly, there is a ROAR and he spins around.

196 ANGLE 196

The HELICOPTER ROARS over the tree tops, coming straight at him. The powerful beam of the landing light sweeps the ground ahead, and finally spots him. For a split second, he is blinded, unable to move, then he turns and runs along the beach, stumbling over driftwood and rubble as he attempts to escape the pursuing chopper.

He falls and the machine swoops past, sending up a huge cloud of windblown sand.

197 ANGLE 197

David looks up to see it making a turn, coming back for what he imagines will be a final pass. Then, suddenly, it stops, hangs in the air, hovering for several seconds. Then, it begins drifting slowly, ominously, towards him.

198 ANGLE 198

David scrambles to his feet ready to make a break for it, as the light beam begins another sweep of the surrounding landscape.

199 DAVID'S POV 199

Falken suddenly shouts from the chopper.

FALKEN
I made the call.

200 ANGLE 200

David reacts. He races forward towards the helicopter. Falken grabs his arm and pulls him aboard as it lifts off into the night sky.

201 INT. NORAD - CRYSTAL PALACE - DAY 201

Soviet subs have moved closer off both coasts. Other symbols show Soviet troops amassing in East Germany, bombers on alert throughout the Eastern bloc. The scoreboard shows a DEFCON 2.

The battle staff nervously monitors the inflow of strategic information as General Berginer listens to an Aide report on the mysterious vanishing BLIPS.

AIDE
(holding telex)
...Intelligence reports rumors of a new Soviet bomber with stealth capabilities. It can project a false radar image six hundred miles away from the real aircraft.

BERINGER
Christ, they've got us chasing shadows.

202 INT. COMPUTER CENTER - CLOSE ON THE SIOP MACHINE 202

humming quietly in its darkened chamber below. The glass fibers surrounding it begin to flicker.

203 EXT. MILITARY AIR BASE - NIGHT 203

The helicopter carrying Falken and David swoops in over the apron of the airport and settles near a small military jet.

204 ANGLE 204

Falken and David get out. They are met by CAPTAIN SERPE, an escort and LIEUTENANT TRAVIS, a pilot who quickly leads them to the waiting jet.

205 ANGLE 205

The engine of the plane swings past the CAMERA, and it speeds away down the runway, lifting into the first vague light of the approaching day.

206 INT. CRYSTAL PALACE 206

There is a tense silence in the Crystal Palace as technicians study their monitors awaiting further developments.

207 ANGLE 207

An airman supresses a yawn as he changes the selection on his radar monitor. He studies it with heavy lidded eyes and the man next to him sips from a styrofoam cup of coffee.

208 ANGLE 208

Beringer begins lighting a cigarette as he leans on a wall behind the Command Balcony. After a few flicks, his lighter doesn't work and he motions a nearby airman for a match.

BERINGER
Airman --

As the man approaches, a KLAXON suddenly SHATTERS the tense silence.

DSP ANALYST
(loudspeaker)
We have a launch detection --

(CONTINUED)

208 CONTINUED: 208

A map of the Soviet Union flashes onto one of the screens. Three hundred missile launches appear, scattered throughout the Russian heartland and from submarines.

The battle floor erupts into activity. VOICES OVERLAP as we pick up the communications flooding in and out of Cheyenne Mountain:

TECHNICIANS ON THE FLOOR
...BMEWS has confirmed a massive attack.

...missile warning... No malfunction.

...Confidence is high. I repeat, confidence is high.

...Cobra Dane, is this an exercise?

...Negative, this is not an exercise.

209 COMMAND BALCONY 209

As the KLAXON WAILS, the battle staff rushes through their carefully rehearsed sequence of crisis responses. General Berginer's Aide hangs up a phone and turns to the General.

AIDE
General, DSP is tracking three hundred inbound Soviet ICBMS.

General Beringer looks over at:

210 ANGLE 210

McPhearson hurries toward the Command Balcony.

BERINGER
(shouts to McPhearson)
Tell me this is a simulation.

McPHEARSON
Jack, I wish I could. There's nothing running down there.

The Soviet missiles have left the atmosphere. The computer projects their trajectories as dotted lines arcing over the pole.

(CONTINUED)

210 CONTINUED: 210

BERINGER
Flush the bombers, get the subs into a discretionary launch mode. We're at a DEFCON 1.

The SCOREBOARD CLICKS to a 1 -- WAR.

CUT TO:

211 EXT. AIR TO AIR SHOTS - MILITARY JET - MORNING 211

The small jet with Falken and David emerges from a backdrop of snow-clad mountains and begins a descent towards Peterson Air Force Base.

212 INT. JET - MORNING 212

TRAVIS, the pilot, speaks over his shoulder to David and Falken who are seated behind him. SERPE, is in the co-pilot's seat.

TRAVIS
We're VFR right into Peterson Air Force Base...I'd say ETA is about eight minutes. This is Colonel Campbell's personal aircraft. To the best of my knowledge, he's never let anyone use her before, so I guess you gentlemen are on a pretty important mission.

Falken just nods. Serpe speaks to Travis.

SERPE
Lieutenant, you better call ahead and make sure they have a chopper waiting to take these men up to the mountain.

Travis takes up the microphone.

TRAVIS
Peterson Tower, this is Juliet Alpha Seven-Niner calling. Request approach, runway zero-four.

213 INT. PETERSON TOWER - MORNING 213

The scene in the tower reflects the chaos of Beringer order to scramble. Flight controllers babble overlapping instructions to the crews of the bombers. One flight controller responds to the call from Travis.

FLIGHT CONTROLLER
Juliet Alpha Seven-Niner, clearance denied. Hold your position and take a hard right hard orbit immediately. We have a SAC launch underway.

214 INT. JET - MORNING 214

Travis reacts.

TRAVIS
Damn...

SERPE
What is it?

TRAVIS
They're scrambling the whole damn bomber wing. We've been ordered to divert to Malmstrom Air Force Base.

SERPE
Malmstrom? That's Montana! You've got to put us into Peterson.

TRAVIS
Hey, I can't violate air space during a launch. They'll shoot us down.

SERPE
These men are on top priority. My orders from NORAD Command are to bring them directly to that mountain.

TRAVIS
Not in this aircraft, there's no way.

DAVID
What about a road? Could you land it on a road?

(CONTINUED)

214 CONTINUED: 214

TRAVIS
This ship needs at least five thousand feet of decent runway. Her landing speed is over one hundred-fifty knots at sea level and this ain't sea level.

There is a momentary silence, then Travis reaches into a chart pocket and hands map to Serpe.

TRAVIS
(continuing)
All right.
(hands him map)
Here, see what we've got up there Captain, just find me something that's straight and level. I'll call ahead and have them send a jeep just in case we survive it.

215 INT. NORAD - CRYSTAL PALACE 215

McPhearson sits behind MAJOR LEM at the SIOP terminal and reads the analysis of the attack.

McPHEARSON
...massive decapitating strike, estimated destruction: Ninety percent of our ground-based strategic forces.

GENERAL BERINGER
What's the SIOP say?

A map showing the recommended targets in the Soviet Union appears on the left screen of the board.

McPHEARSON
Full-scale retaliatory strike, launch on warning, concentrated on enemy command, strategic and industrial targets.

GENERAL BERINGER
(under his breath)
I need a machine to tell me that?

216 EXT. MOUNTAIN PASS - DAY 216

The jet speeds past the rock walls of a mountain pass.

217 INT. JET - DAY 217

David stares out the window as rocks rush past the plane in a dizzying blurr. Travis, hauls back on the controls.

TRAVIS
Pucker up 'cause I'm gonna shave that ridge.

218 EXT. MOUNTAIN RIDGE - DAY 218

The jet squeezes between a pair of looming rocks to clear a sharp ridge, then cuts back and begins dropping like a stone into a small valley.

219 INT. PLANE 219

Travis reacts.

TRAVIS
I'll be dipped in shit.

220 POV 220

A pair of jeeps parked right in the middle of the road.

TRAVIS
Right in the middle of our goddamn runway... Hang on, I'm gonna ask these boys to move into the slow lane.

He firewalls the throttle.

221 EXT. THE ROAD 221

The plane comes in at full power about ten feet above the deck passing directly over the jeeps. The men dive for cover and as the plane lifts to climb out of the narrow valley, they scramble into their vehicles and start the engines.

222 INT. COMMAND BALCONY 222

Cuomo and Beringer face the COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER.

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER
The President is on his way to Andrews to join Airborne Command. Sir, we've got to give him a launch option.

Beringer and Cuomo exchange a look. Beringer makes his decision.

BERINGER
Let's go into a launch mode. Close up the mountain.

223 EXT. ROAD - DAY 223

The jeeps bounce off the road and stop. The men look back towards the sharp rocks of the ridge.

224 ANGLE 224

Suddenly, the jet reappears, missing the ridge by a few feet. It falls heavily into the valley, wobbling as it approaches the road. The wheels touch and puffs of blue smoke immediately indicate the brakes.

225 INT. JET - DAY 225

Travis steers and brakes for all he's worth as the jet swings nearly off one shoulder, then the other. The SQUEAL of BRAKES can he heard. David is wide-eyed but not afraid.

226 EXT. THE ROAD - DAY 226

As the plane rolls to a stop, the jeeps head for it. As a side door opens, David and Falken drop several feet to the road, then scramble into the back of the lead jeep. It speeds away with the other one following.

227 INT. CRYSTAL PALACE 227

At a group of monitors to one side of the Crystal Palace, a LIEUTENANT and a SERGEANT run a check list as they prepare to seal the mountain.

LIEUTENANT
Initiate internal power.

(CONTINUED)

227 CONTINUED: 227

SERGEANT
Generators on and functioning.

LIEUTENANT
Disconnect external power...

SERGEANT
External power disconnected.

LIEUTENANT
Seal off ventilation shafts...

SERGEANT
Shaft locks sealed.

228 EXT. ROAD TO NORAD 228

The jeep with David and Falken wheels around a corner, nearly skidding over the edge, then with a final burst of speed, it smashes through the wooden barricade at the tunnel's entrance and vanishes inside.

229 INT. NORAD TUNNEL 229

The jeep races down the tunnel and SCREECHES to a stop as the huge blast door is closing. David jumps out and rushes toward the narrowing opening. Without hesitating, Falken follows. A split second later, the heavy DOOR CLUNKS shut.

230 INT. CRYSTAL PALACE - COMMAND BALCONY 230

The battle staff prepares for the upcoming combat conditions notifying the various civilian and military defense posts throughout the world by phone and radio.

MAJOR LEM
(to Colonel Cuomo)
All wings report missiles targeted and enabled, awaiting Presidential launch codes.

COLONEL CUOMO
(over loud-speaker)
We are in a launch mode.

BERINGER
(to Major Lem)
Lock out changes.

Major Lem types the instructions into the terminal. The screen displays:

MISSILES TARGETED AND ENABLED.

<u>CHANGES LOCKED OUT</u>

CUT TO:

231 INT. NORAD CORRIDORS 231

Escorts race with Falken and David past security posts toward the Crystal Palace. Pat Healy has joined the group. Running ahead, she holds a top level security badge and shouts as she pushes through a crowded corridor.

PAT
They're cleared...They're cleared.

The double doors to the Crystal Palace are held open for them and they enter.

232 INT. CRYSTAL PALACE 232

Falken gazes around at the command center of the global automated battlefield he helped create. He studies the big board, which, at this moment, shows the missiles as they begin to MIRV: each missile, splitting into "multiple reentry vehicles," rain down from space towards the Earth.

Falken looks up at the Command Balcony at the faces of the battle staff: General Beringer, Colonel Cuomo, Major Lem and McPhearson.

AIDE
(to General Beringer)
General, DSP is still tracking three hundred inbounds presently MIRVing to approximately two thousand four hundred impacting points.

233 ON McPHEARSON 233

On seeing Falken and David, he rushes towards them.

FALKEN
Hello John, where are we?

McPHEARSON
What?

FALKEN
How far has it gone?

McPHEARSON
Stephen, I understand you've been onto Washington and requested full clearance...I don't really see any point in your coming here.

(CONTINUED)

233 CONTINUED: 233

FALKEN
(cutting him off)
John, I see the wife still picks your ties.

Falken pushes past. McPhearson dogs him.

McPHEARSON
Listen, Stephen, I don't know what this kid has told you, but...

FALKEN
(cutting him off)
Just tell me how far it's gone.

McPHEARSON
Everything's ready for the President to order a counterstrike. We're advising him that our forces will be destroyed unless we launch before impact.

Falken nods slowly and looks at David.

FALKEN
It's a bluff.

McPHEARSON
A bluff? Stephen, do you realize what this kid has done?

FALKEN
John, it's a bluff...Call it off...

Falken walks past McPhearson. He calls out to General Beringer. He has to yell to make himself heard.

FALKEN
(continuing)
Hello...General Beringer. General... What you see on that screen up there is a fantasy. A computer enhanced hallucination. Those blips you <u>are</u> looking at <u>are</u> not real missiles... They <u>are</u> phantoms.

234 ANGLE 234

General Beringer stares down at Falken and David.

(CONTINUED)

234 CONTINUED: 234

McPHEARSON
(to Beringer)
Jack, I have absolutely no indication of a simulation run.

MAJOR LEM
Two minutes until impact.

DAVID
It's still playing a game with me.
(pointing)
It thinks I'm the Russians and it's going for a first strike.

FALKEN
General, your system is trying to bluff you. It's trying to get you to launch an attack because it can't launch on its own.

COLONEL CUOMO
(to Beringer)
Sir? Airborne Command.

Beringer looks at the phone in Cuomo's hand and then to McPhearson.

McPHEARSON
Jack, we've checked and re-checked everything...Everything's working perfectly.

Falken interrupts him.

FALKEN
But does it make any sense?

BERINGER
Does <u>what</u> make any sense?

FALKEN
General, are you prepared to destroy the enemy?

BERINGER
Yes, fully.

FALKEN
Do you think they know that?

(CONTINUED)

234 CONTINUED: (2) 234

BERINGER
(sarcastically)
I believe we've made it about as clear as we could.

FALKEN
Then don't. Tell the President to ride out the attack.

MAJOR LEM
Ninety seconds.

COLONEL CUOMO
(insistent)
Sir, they need a decision.

(CONTINUED)

234 CONTINUED: (2) 234

FALKEN
General. Do you really believe that the enemy would attack without provocation, with so many missiles, with their entire strategic bomber command, and their entire submarine force, so we would have no choice but to totally annihilate them? General, you are listening to a machine. Do the world a favor and don't act like one.

General Beringer stares at the swarm of warheads moving toward their targets. He turns slowly and takes the phone that Colonel Cuomo holds out to him.

BERINGER
Yes, Mr. President.
(looks down at Falken)
Sir, I cannot positively confirm the inbounds. There's reason to believe they may not exist.
(listens)
Yes, sir, that's affirmative.
(pause)
Thank you, sir, so do I.

He hands the phone back to Colonel Cuomo and takes a deep breath.

BERINGER
(continuing)
Who's first and how soon?

MAJOR LEM
(at SIOP)
Initial impact points -- Clear Alaska...Fifteenth Wing at March... Eglin in Florida. Impacts projected in just a little over one minute, sir.

BERINGER
(to Colonel Cuomo)
Get me the senior controller at each station. I want to talk to them myself...We're gonna hold our launch until the first confirmed impact.

(CONTINUED)

234 CONTINUED: (3) 234

Colonel Cuomo instantly punches up the various command posts on his console panel. An ALERT WARBLE emanates from the phone in front of him as three red lights blink on.

COLONEL CUOMO
(into phone)
All stations this is Crystal Palace -- stand by for a message from CinC NORAD.

General Beringer picks up his phone as one by one the voices are heard over the loudspeaker, voices of men who are trying to remain calm.

LT. COL. BLUMLEIN (V.O.)
Eglin Air Force Base, Lieutenant Colonel Blumlein.

COL. WARE (V.O.)
Fifteenth Air Force, Colonel Ware.

PVT. DOUGHERTY (V.O.)
(quavering adolescent voice)
This is Clear, Alaska...uh, the senior controller isn't here right now.

BERINGER
(smiling)
That's all right. Who are you?

PVT. DOUGHERTY (V.O.)
This is Private Dougherty, sir.

BERINGER
This is General Beringer at NORAD. The current situation...
(starts again)
We have detected approximately twenty-four hundred inbound warheads... however, at this time we cannot confirm this. I repeat, confidence is low. We're estimating impact at --

MAJOR LEM
Twenty-five seconds.

BERINGER
We're right there with you, guys. We've taken all the steps we can.

(CONTINUED)

234 CONTINUED: (4) 234

From one of the open lines comes the FAINT SOUND of someone CRYING.

BERINGER
(continuing)
Stay on this channel as long as possible. We'll be standing by.

The entire Combat Operations Center falls silent.

COLONEL CUOMO
Six seconds, sir. Five...four...

Everyone watches the center board. The arcs of the leading warheads approach their targets.

235 ANGLE - WALL DISPLAYS 235

They HIT SILENTLY.

236 ANGLE - CRYSTAL PALACE 236

After a pause, General Beringer looks at Colonel Cuomo.

COLONEL CUOMO
(into phone)
This is Crystal Palace, are you still on?

Dead silence.

COLONEL CUOMO
(continuing; pleading)
This is Crystal palace, <u>are you still on</u>? Is anyone there?

A burst of STATIC. Suddenly:

(CONTINUED)

236 CONTINUED: 236

LT. COL. BLUMLEIN (V.O.)
That's affirmative, sir.

PVT. DOUGHERTY (V.O.)
Yeah we're here. Jesus H. Christ, we're still here.

Up on the status board the impacts keep coming, covering the entire continent.

COLONEL CUOMO
(excited)
Our boards are confirming impact --

COLONEL WARE (V.O.)
No, sir, no impact. We're alive and well.

General Beringer throws up his fists triumphantly. The tension on the battle floor erupts into a raucous cheer.

BERINGER
(to Colonel Cuomo)
Recall the bombers and let's stand the missiles down. That's an order.

237 ANGLE 237

David, noting that Falken is no longer beside him, glances around.

238 DAVID'S POINT OF VIEW 238

The huge electronic displays tower above Falken as he wanders along the front of the room. Oblivious to the atmosphere of celebration, he gazes thoughtfully at the display of technology which he helped create. The map of the UNITED STATES continues to be obliterated by the rain of nuclear detonations.

239 ANGLE 239

David moves toward Falken. They stand together observing the scene.

240 ANGLE 240

McPhearson glares at Falken and David, pondering a host of unanswered questions. After a beat, he starts towards them.

241 ANGLE - COMMAND BALCONY 241

An ebullient General Beringer and his aides congratulate themselves and the team on the floor.

As Colonel Cuomo orders the bomber and submarine forces back, Major Lem types instructions into the SIOP console.

242 CLOSE ON MAJOR LEM 242

His smile fades quickly as he tries to log onto the system.

MAJOR LEM
(to Colonel Cuomo)
Would you get me Dr. McPhearson right away.

243 ANGLE 243

Falken notes McPhearson's approach.

FALKEN
Uh, oh, let's get out of here before he offers us something to eat.

(CONTINUED)

243 CONTINUED: 243

McPhearson is about to speak to Falken when a TECHNICIAN seated at a console stops him.

TECHNICIAN
Doctor McPhearson...Major Lem.

He hands McPhearson a headset.

244 ANGLE - MAJOR LEM 244

MAJOR LEM
(into headset)
Sir -- something very strange is happening. The SIOP refuses to let me log back on. I can't get in to stand down the missiles.

245 ANGLE - McPHEARSON 245

stares at Falken.

McPHEARSON
(into headset)
Hold on.

He turns to a terminal next to him and hits the "Enter" key:

MONITOR: LOG ON

McPHEARSON: 7*KQ201
McPHEARSON

MONITOR: IDENTIFICATION NOT RECOGNIZED.
YOU HAVE BEEN DISCONNECTED.

McPHEARSON
(continuing, to Falken)
Stephen, it's not letting us back in.

CUT TO:

246 INT. COMPUTER CENTER 246

Reiner sits at his console, surrounded by a team of frantic technicians.

(CONTINUED)

246 CONTINUED: 246

REINER
(on phone)
I know, it's weird. No one can get back on. We're trying everything. It's like the entire password file has been wiped out.

247 INT. CRYSTAL PALACE 247

David and Falken stand near McPhearson. David looks at the board.

DAVID
What are those?

McPhearson looks up at the board.

A series of eleven random numbers and letters flash on the left screen, changing so rapidly that the digits are blurred.

McPhearson looks at David, then back at the screen, a growing look of dread on his face.

McPHEARSON
Christ, the launch codes...

CUT TO:

248 EXT. MINUTEMAN MISSILE LAUNCH CAPSULE - AERIAL VIEW - DAY 248

It's the same site we saw in the beginning. We're MOVING DOWN towards it...

249 INT. LAUNCH CAPSULE - CORRIDOR - DAY 249

...We're inside...TRAVELLING DOWN the corridors to the underground launch level...

250 INT. AIR LOCK - DAY 250

...Through the oval air lock door into...

251 INT. LAUNCH CAPSULE 251

We keep MOVING...it looks the same as it did...except that the chairs for the missile commanders aren't there anymore...

(CONTINUED)

251 CONTINUED: 251

...there's no one inside the capsule.

252 MISSILE LAUNCH CONSOLE - TIGHT ON THE CONSOLE'S COMPUTER SCREEN 252

where the ten missiles controlled by this capsule have their status displayed:

MISSILES ENABLED
TARGET SELECTION COMPLETE
TIME ON TARGET SEQUENCE COMPLETE
YIELD SELECTION COMPLETE
CHANGES LOCKED OUT

The only thing needed to launch the missiles is the launch code, which would appear at the bottom of the computer screen.

Suddenly eleven bold white characters -- three letters, five digits, three letters -- appear at the bottom of the screen, changing rapidly, in seemingly random order.

CUT TO:

253 INT. NORAD COMPUTER CENTER 253

Paul Reiner leads a team of jumpsuited technicians through the cavernous facility, opening up processing units, probing circuitry, frantically searching for electronic clues.

Reiner speaks into a walkie-talkie.

REINER
We've checked the random number generators, but they're not even running. I have no idea...it could be coming from anywhere.

254 INT. CRYSTAL PALACE FLOOR 254

McPHEARSON
(on phone)
Keep looking.

He gives up his headset and hurries to the Command Balcony.

255 ANGLE - COMMAND BALCONY 255

There is an atmosphere of confusion as McPhearson arrives.

(CONTINUED)

255 CONTINUED: 255

McPHEARSON
The machine has locked us out, it's transmitting a steady flow of random numbers to the missile silos. It's trying to hit the launch codes...
...it's still trying to launch those missiles.

PAT HEALY
(nose in calculator)
There's an eighty percent chance of it hitting those numbers within... six minutes.

BERINGER
Pull the goddamn plug on it.

McPHEARSON
We're locked in a launch mode. The system would interpret any shut down as if this facility were destroyed in an attack. The computers at the silos will carry out their last instruction, which was a launch order.

BERINGER
If we still had men in those silos, we could give them a verbal order not to launch...but we ain't got shit.

PAT HEALY
What about disarming the missiles manually?

McPHEARSON
Silo by silo?..There's over a thousand.

BERINGER
Let's try it anyway.
(to Communi-
cations Aide)
Get hold of every missile wing.

COLONEL CUOMO
General...It's the President.

General Beringer sighs and crosses to Cuomo.

McPHEARSON
What are you going to tell him?

BERINGER
(reluctantly)
To order the bombers back to their fail-safes -- we may have to go through with this after all.

CUT TO:

256 EXT. NORTH DAKOTA MISSILE SILO - DAY 256

A van drives full-speed up a dirt road and skids to a stop in front of a thick concrete slab. Cows graze outside a barbed-wire fence.

Two MEN scramble out of the van and race to the shed. The first man there carefully punches out a combination on the lock. The other yanks the door open and they run inside.

257 INT. MISSILE SILO - MATTE 257

A sixty-foot-deep chasm contains the three-stage, six-foot wide, 78,000 pound MINUTEMAN III ICBM waiting for the codes which will send it and its nine megaton warhead 15,000 mph to its target 6,000 miles away.

A ladder descends into the pit. The first man runs to it and clambers down.

258 INT. MISSILE SILO - BOTTOM 258

He reaches the bottom and inserts his "Safing" key into a control panel to lock out the impending "launch vote." Above the panel is a graffiti: "Reach Out and Touch Someone."

CREWMAN
(yelling from above)
C'mon -- we got nine more.

259 INT. NORAD - CRYSTAL PALACE 259

The random numbers are running out rapidly. McPhearson turns to Falken.

McPHEARSON
Stephen, try and get back in.

FALKEN
How can I?... You've taken out my password.

DAVID
Maybe it'll open up for something it's interested in.

McPHEARSON
What?

(CONTINUED)

259 CONTINUED: 259

DAVID
It likes to play games. Maybe it'll want to play a game.

Falken grins at David's ingenuity.

FALKEN
You try it.

McPHEARSON
For Christ sake, Stephen --

FALKEN
Well, he can hardly do worse than you have, John.

260 ANGLE - MAJOR LEM AT SIOP TERMINAL 260

SYSTEMS PROGRAMMERS are throwing out suggestions to Major Lem, who types into the terminal, willing to try anything.

PROGRAMMERS
....feed it a tapeworm...
-- no, too risky -- might crash the system --
...how'd the kid get in... the back door...
-- we took it out --
.... shit. Can we invade the deep logic?
-- we keep hitting a damn firewall ---

MONITOR: IDENTIFICATION NOT RECOGNIZED.
YOU HAVE BEEN DISCONNECTED.

261 ANGLE 261

Falken, McPhearson and David approach. David pushes through the crowd to Major Lem and speaks quietly.

DAVID
Have it list games.

Major Lem looks over his shoulder at the kid, puzzled, then at McPhearson, who nods.

McPHEARSON
Try it, Bill.

(CONTINUED)

261 CONTINUED: 261

Major Lem types into the terminal.

The games list appears -- the list David first reached from his bedroom -- projected on the huge center screen of the big board.

MONITOR: FALKEN'S MAZE
BLACK JACK
GIN RUMMY
HEARTS
BRIDGE
CHECKERS
CHESS
POKER
FIGHTER COMBAT
GUERILLA ENGAGEMENT
DESERT WARFARE
AIR-TO-GROUND ACTIONS
THEATREWIDE TACTICAL WARFARE
THEATREWIDE BIOTOXIC AND
CHEMICAL WARFARE
GLOBAL THERMONUCLEAR WAR

As David speaks, Major Lem types.

DAVID
Chess.

LEM: CHESS

MONITOR: IDENTIFICATION NOT RECOGNIZED

DAVID
(continuing)
Poker.

LEM: POKER

MONITOR: IDENTIFICATION NOT RECOGNIZED

DAVID
(continuing)
Shit. The security system won't let anything through.

He stares at the list, gets an idea.

DAVID
(continuing)
Global Thermonuclear War.

LEM: GLOBAL THERMONUCLEAR WAR

MONITOR: GAME ROUTINE RUNNING

(CONTINUED)

261 CONTINUED: (2) 261

DAVID
(continuing)
Stop game routine.

LEM: STOP GAME ROUTINE

MONITOR: IMPROPER INSTRUCTION.
ROUTINE MUST COMPLETE BEFORE RESET.
YOU HAVE BEEN DISCONNECTED.

The screen goes blank. One of the Programmers is impatient to try a new approach. David stands, frustrated, at the balcony railing, watching the furious activity below. He looks to Falken and then to the random numbers which are running out rapidly on the screen to the left of the big board.

262 ON DAVID 262

He's staring at the board. Suddenly, he turns back to Major Lem at the SIOP, shouting excitedly.

DAVID
Put the Game List back up.

MAJOR LEM
We tried that --

DAVID
(vehement)
Put it up.
(to Falken)
It's not on the list!

FALKEN
What?

Major Lem obeys David and the Games List flashes onto the screen.

David leans over the terminal and furiously hits the keys.

DAVID: TIC-TAC-TOE

David stares into the screen as if he's trying to pull Joshua out by force of will... it's a battle...

Finally ---

(CONTINUED)

262 CONTINUED: 262

Four familiar straight lines from childhood shine onto the screen. Falken's eyes brighten with anticipation.

JOSHUA: ONE OR TWO PLAYERS?
PLEASE LIST NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

THE TIC-TAC-TOE grid illuminates the center screen of the big board, and begins to draw the attention of the people on the floor and the balcony.

McPHEARSON
You're in! Order it to disarm the missiles and cease random function immediately.

Major Lem takes over and obeys.

TIC-TAC-TOE vanishes.

JOSHUA: IMPROPER INSTRUCTION.
CHANGES LOCKED OUT
YOU HAVE BEEN DISCONNECTED.

The screen goes blank. David types into the terminal. The Game reappears.

McPHEARSON
(incredulous)
You're going to play it?

JOSHUA: ONE OR TWO PLAYERS?
LIST NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

DAVID: ONE

JOSHUA: X OR O?
X GOES FIRST
3-IN-A-ROW WINS

A voice shouts from the floor "X in the center square."

DAVID: X

JOSHUA: YOUR MOVE

He makes his move. An O appears instantly in one corner.

263 ANGLE - GENERAL BERINGER 263

From his position at a communications console at the

(CONTINUED)

263 CONTINUED: 263

rear of the Command Balcony, General Beringer turns and gazes in amazement at the display on the board.

264 ANGLE - DAVID 264

JOSHUA: STALEMATE.
WOULD YOU CARE TO PLAY AGAIN?

VOICE FROM THE FLOOR
You can't win.

DAVID
(shouting)
I know that. It doesn't...
(pause)
It hasn't learned.

David turns to Dr. McPhearson.

DAVID
(continuing)
Is there any way to make it play against itself?

McPhearson draws a blank. So does Major Lem.

FALKEN
Yes. Number of players: Zero.

David requests a new game. It asks the number of players. David glances around the Crystal Palace, at the faces looking up. He takes a deep breath and hits the key.

DAVID: ZERO

An X appears in the center of the grid.

O's and X's fill in the squares to a stalemate. The moves vanish.

Another X, followed by another sequence of moves. Stalemate.

Again... again... again... again... again... again...

David watches the big board, repeatedly hitting the ENTER key as if trying to prompt Joshua.

DAVID
Come on. Learn, goddamnit.

(CONTINUED)

264 CONTINUED: 264

General Beringer silently approaches the group gathered behind David at the console.

The pace is picking up gradually as the no-win loop consumes more and more system power... moves appear and are wiped out with an increasing frequency... until the huge grid is filled with a blur of dueling symbols... the X in the center square FLICKERING more rapidly as the program plays out hundreds of games per second.

MAJOR LEM
The random numbers are slowing down...

REINER
(amazed)
It's caught in a loop... forcing it to draw more and more power from the rest of the system...

THE STROBE EFFECT INCREASES IN VELOCITY electrifying the expressions of everyone looking on in the darkened war room.

265 ON FALKEN 265

At a slight distance from all the activity, Falken watches in the flickering light with the slightest trace of a smile.

266 ON DAVID 266

He's enjoying the show.

267 THE CRYSTAL PALACE 267

begins to glow... the whole place lit up by the intensity of the dueling symbols...

There's a BRILLIANT FLASH.

The screen goes dark.

DAVID
Uh oh.

SUDDENLY, GIANT PROJECTIONS OF THE ENTIRE WORLD FILL ALL

(CONTINUED)

267 CONTINUED: 267

SIXTEEN SCREENS. AT BLINDING SPEED, THE TWO SUPER POWERS REPEATEDLY PLAY OUT WORLD WAR III ON THE GLOBAL AUTOMATED BATTLEFIELD. BOMBERS RACE ACROSS THE GLOBE. VOLLEYS OF MISSILES LAUNCH AND IMPACT IN SECONDS, MUSHROOM CLOUDS SPREAD ACROSS THE TWO LAND MASSES. EACH NUCLEAR EXCHANGE SCENARIO ALWAYS ENDS IN THE TOTAL DESTRUCTION OF BOTH SIDES.

BERINGER
(to McPhearson in awe)
What's it doing?

DAVID
It's learning...

SUDDENLY THE WORLD WARS END. THE RANDOM NUMBERS CLICK TO A HALT.

The Crystal Palace is silent. The screen lights up again.

JOSHUA: GREETINGS PROFESSOR FALKEN

DAVID: HELLO

JOSHUA: A STRANGE GAME.
THE ONLY WINNING MOVE IS
NOT TO PLAY.

Falken's eyes are fixed on the screen.

JOSHUA: HOW ABOUT A NICE GAME OF CHESS?

David looks up and turns to Falken, who gently smiles at Joshua's invitation.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

268 EXT. SEATTLE NEIGHBORHOOD - DUSK 268

Along a section of park in North Seattle, Jennifer can be seen among a small group of after-work joggers. David labors gallantly to keep up with her.

269 ANGLE 269

As they turn off onto a neighborhood street, Jennifer

(CONTINUED)

269 CONTINUED: 269

notes David is straining behind her. She slows and falls back toward him.

JENNIFER
You okay?

Noting that she has deliberately fallen back for his sake, David applies a burst of speed. Jennifer quickly catches up to him.

JENNIFER
(continuing)
Take it easy... you've got to work up to it gradually.

DAVID
(between labored breaths)
I'm okay.

270 EXT. SEATTLE STREET - NIGHT 270

He continues to push as they turn onto his block. They sprint, laughing with exhaustion, as they near his house and David almost beats her to his driveway where the race ends.

271 ANGLE 271

David gasps for breath and paces around his lawn, walking off his fatigue.

JENNIFER
You're going to be so sore...

DAVID
(coughs)
I'm fine.

JENNIFER
Yeah, you sound really great.

David laughs at himself while he coughs.

DAVID
Next time I'll beat you.

Jennifer smiles fetchingly and jogs in place.

JENNIFER
We'll see... Well, I better get going, my parents don't want me jogging alone after dark.

(CONTINUED)

271 CONTINUED: 271

David walks over to her. He has recovered. He looks at her for a beat then suddenly, he reaches out, puts both hands on her shoulders and kisses her rather boldly on the mouth.

Jennifer smiles at him as he stands in front of her. She begins lightly jogging in place.

JENNIFER
(continuing)
See ya...

She turns and trots away across the street. David remains watching her... liking her. Then, he walks towards the front door of his house, closing it behind him.

272 EXT. SEATTLE - NIGHT 272

It is a clear and quiet Seattle night.

273 EXT. SEATTLE STREET - NIGHT 273

The CAMERA slowly MOVES DOWN the deserted street towards David's house.

274 INT. LIGHTMAN HOUSE - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT 274

The CAMERA slowly continues to CREEP TOWARDS David's bedroom.

275 INT. DAVID'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 275

The CAMERA WANDERS THROUGH David's room, which is much like it was before except for a very subtle suggestion of order. The monitor is dark. The area near his terminal seems somehow forlorn and neglected. The CAMERA FINDS the peacefully sleeping figure of David. Gradually, the quiet is broken by a barely audible, HIGH-PITCHED WHINE. As it slowly increases in volume, an ominous RUMBLING begins. The unexplained combination of sounds grows in intensity until it finally awakens David. With wide-eyed apprehension, he slowly rises from bed. The ROAR becomes deafening. Suddenly, the room is bathed with an intense FLASH of brilliant, white light. Papers fly in all directions. David is terrified as the curtains and glass violently blow in from the windows. In a panic,

(CONTINUED)

275 CONTINUED: 275

David sharply turns towards a mirror. As the light suddenly swells to an almost blinding level, David watches in horror as the flesh appears to blow away from his face, leaving, for an instant, the image of his skull.

276 ANGLE 276

Still in his bed, David awakens from his nightmare with a jolt. He lies perfectly still, heart pounding. After a few moments, he glances around the room, gradually turning back into reality. Everything seems as it should be. The quiet of the night broken only by the SOUND of a mild winter WIND.

David settles back onto his pillow and quietly gazes into the darkness.

FADE OUT.

THE END